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COURT ROYAL.

A STORY OF CROSS CURRENTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

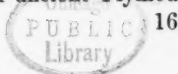
CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE DEVIL.



At the top or at the bottom? At which shall we begin? Sediment to-day is scum to-morrow. That which is on the surface sinks. Therefore, does it matter? The universe is in revolution, so is the social order. We will begin at the bottom, as most philosophical. Only the builders of Lagado began their edifices at the apex.

The Barbican is the oldest portion of ancient Plymouth. It
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consists of a collection of crazy houses built along the quay of Sutton Pool, which was the ancient port of Plymouth. The houses are tall, with slated fronts and bow windows, much out of the perpendicular, of various dates. In these houses dwelt the old merchants of Plymouth, who equipped vessels against the Spaniards and carried Tavistock friezes to all the ports of Europe. From Sutton Pool Drake sailed against the Armada. The grand merchant-houses have become the habitations of dealers in marine stores, drinking-shops, and eating-houses.

Sic transit gloria mundi.

The houses on the Barbican are so crowded that they are devoid of back yards, and when the inhabitants have a washing they thrust their garments from their windows on poles to dry in the sea-breeze and the sun. Some ingenious dwellers in these old houses contrive a system of rigging between their poles whereby a much larger wash can be exposed. On every day that lends itself to drying, the Barbican flutters its flags and streamers. The flags vary in shape, more than in colour, and most of all in their heraldic achievements. Some are 'enhanced' with flaunces, others with bendlets, frets, bordures, even with bars sinister. Certain bifurcated pennons show a leaning towards 'escutcheoning.' The banners are for the most part white, tawny as old Tiber, or Isabelle. Some few are azure of a deep and dingy blue. From one window a circular mass of drapery, gules, bulges in the wind. It is the petticoat of the lady of the ham and sausage shop.

One corner house, standing between two thoroughfares, never displayed its bunting. Apparently, no washing was ever done in it. Over the door of this house hung three golden balls, and in scaling paint over the window was inscribed the name—'LAZARUS.'

The Barbican is not a savoury place. Here the fish are unladen and sold, and here the little fish that fall out of the baskets get trampled out of shape, and rot in the mire.

When the tide is out, the ooze in Sutton Pool sends up its complement of effluvium. Providentially, the sea-tangles, hanging from the wharf in fringes of dull green, exhale chlorine, and the sea-breeze brings in ozone, to disinfect and disperse the pestilential odours.

The Barbican is a busy place all day, and late into the night; but at noon, for an hour, it drops into quiet. Then all the sound that habitually pervades it is sucked in at the doors of the taverns and eating-houses, and fills them to repletion.

It was precisely at this hour, one hot day in early June, that the stillness of the Barbican quay was broken by piercing and protracted shrieks.

Two persons and a cat alone occupied the wharf at that time: the one was the pier-guard, who was then lounging on the wall looking seaward; the other was an old woman sitting under a large umbrella with her back to sun and sea, fast asleep before the table of gingerbeer-bottles of which she disposed. The cat took no notice of the screams, nor did the old woman, who only woke when the quay became re-peopled and business looked alive. The guard turned leisurely round, drew his hands out of his pockets, walked to the steps by which passengers disembarked from the Oreston steamer, descended them, cast off a boat, and, stepping in, shouted, 'Hold hard, you little devil!'

Some faces, attracted by the cries, appeared at the windows, but the view was obscured by fluttering drapery. The lady over the ham and sausage shop, Thresher by name, saw what was the matter; her visual ray was not cut off by the washing. She shouted some practical advice, then turned and scolded her husband, who lay on the bed with his boots upon the pillow, reading a Radical paper. After that she drew on a jacket and descended to the quay.

Some men, moreover, who had finished their dinner, issued from the eating-houses to ascertain what was the matter, and those who had not done bolted the rest of their food, fearful of being too late for an accident, yet unwilling to leave unconsumed good victuals for which they had paid.

The screams became louder, shriller. Then they were interrupted for a minute, again to ring forth as loudly as before.

The cries issued from the lungs of a child—a girl—of twelve, who was in the arms of a wretched-looking woman. They were near the edge of the quay when the screams began. The woman was attempting to fling herself and the child into the water. The girl had her arms about an old cannon, planted in the granite coping as a hold for hawsers, and clung to it desperately. Finally, the superior strength of the woman prevailed, and she precipitated herself and the child over the edge into the Pool. Then, for a moment, the cries were silenced, for a moment only, while the child was under water. Both rose to the surface, covered with mud, near a chain. In a moment, the child saw her opportunity, grasped the chain, and crawled up it, with the water

streaming from her, looking like a drowning rat, and again she shrieked as loud as her lungs would allow.

In a moment, also, the pierkeeper was at hand in the boat. He lifted the woman out of the water, and then laid hold of the child. The latter, unable at first to distinguish that the hands grasping her were not those of her mother, and that the object for which she was grasped was not to drown her, clung frantically to the chain, and yelled with such force and penetration in the tones, that the guard lost patience, and said angrily, 'Let go, you squalling cat, will you?'

Instantly the child relaxed her hold, and allowed herself to be lifted into the boat. She knew, by the voice, that she was in the hands of a man, come to save her. When she was in the boat, she dipped her palms in the water, and washed the mud from her eyes and mouth and nose. After that she set herself to clean the face of her mother with the skirt of her frock.

'What is the meaning of this?' said the man.

'I wouldn't be drowned,' answered the child. 'I told mother as much, but her paid no heed to what I said.'

'Now then, missus,' said he, addressing the woman with rough kindness, 'what did you do it for?'

The poor creature made no reply. She sat, cuddled into a heap in the bottom, hugging her knees, with the water pouring off her. Her head was bowed on her bosom.

'Did y' hear, now?' shouted the child, raising the sodden hair off the mother's ear. 'The gemman asked you a civil question, and you must answer him civil too. He asked you what made you do it.'

'I am wretched,' she replied in a faint voice; 'my husband is dead. We have been starving. I can find no situation because of Joanna, and get no work. I did not know what to do with myself and her, and as us couldn't find a situation on earth, I thought we'd go and get one in heaven.'

'But I wouldn't,' put in the girl, emphatically, looking the boatman level in the eyes. 'I told mother plain I was not agreeable. I don't want to go to heaven—and,' with a stamp on the bottom of the boat, 'I won't go.'

'You've a will of your own, apparently,' said the man, smiling.

'I don't choose to be drowned,' answered the girl. Then she thrust her wet and dirty hair out of her face, and tried to knot it behind her head, 'and I don't choose as mother shall be, neither.'

'I'll tell you what, ma'am,' said the pierkeeper; 'two good things have combined for the saving of you to-day. First comes I. I was on the spot handy. Secondly, the tide was running out and leaving the Pool dry; so there was no depth available for drowning purposes.' The boat touched the steps. 'Up with you, both,' he said, 'and mind, no more of these games.'

The wretched woman obeyed meekly. The child strode up the stone stairs full of confidence, saying, but hardly in a tone of apology, 'You know, mother, I was not agreeable.'

The woman staggered after her daughter to the pier, and then stood there helpless, dazed, looking about her without light in her eyes.

The water ran off her and formed a pond at her feet; the slime was smeared over her hair and face and hands. Her soaked garments clung to her, revealing at once how few and thin they were.

By this time several persons had assembled. They surrounded the little group and eyed them curiously. These were mostly men, still chewing the remains of their dinner or picking their teeth. Mrs. Thresher, from the ham-shop, was there in a black body over a red petticoat, very short, exposing dirty stockings and slippers down at heel.

Questions showered on the poor creature, which she did not answer, perhaps did not catch. She clutched her child's hand convulsively, and with disengaged hand wiped the water from her eyes.

'Now look you here,' said the pier-guard, 'you oughtn't to have done it, or if you did ought to do it, you ought to have done it in a less dirty place. Sutton Pool is not a palatable place in which to end existence. Wait till the tide is out, and have a look for yourself. I reckon further acquaintance won't make you more friendly. It will rinse all taste of *felo-de-se* out of your mouth. Dead cats, rotten cabbage, decayed potatoes, cracked cloam (crockery), old tobacco-pipes, kettles and pans full of holes, boots bursted, and soleless shoes, scatted (broken) bottles, anything, everything that goes to make filth is chucked in there and rots away into black paste which is proper consolidated smeech (smell). I reckon that Sutton Pool bottom is made of the dirtiest dregs of civilisation. That is what we've hauled you and your brat out of. If you've any sense of decency in you, keep out of Sutton Pool. The blue sea is a different crib altogether.'

'I won't be drowned neither in the blue sea, nor in Sutton Pool, nor in a pickling-tub,' said the child resolutely; 'I'm damned if I be.'

The circle of lookers-on burst out laughing.

'Oh, you wicked child!' exclaimed Mrs. Thresher, of the hamshop. 'Where do you expect to go, using them swearing words?'

'Father said it when he meant a thing—much,' answered the child.

'Your father smoked, I reckon.'

'Yes, he did.'

'But you don't see ladies smoke.'

'No.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Thresher, 'pipes and cusses are nat'ral in a man's mouth, but natur' herself protests when you see either in the mouth of a woman.'

'Did you hear how the little creature squealed?' asked the pierkeeper.

'Her cries drew me from my dinner, and lost me the picking of my rabbit-bones,' said one of the men.

'I'd have had another glass of ale,' said a second, 'but I thought two foreigners was fighting and sticking knives into each other. I wouldn't ha' missed *that*. I was always a bit of a sportsman since I was a boy.'

'I cried,' said the girl, 'because I would not let mother drown me.'

'And cry tha' did, by jiggers!' exclaimed a skipper, a large man from Yorkshire. 'I was down in my cabin when tha' piped.'

'Look here,' said the pier-guard; 'if us stand here in a knot, the police will be suspecting something and turn their beaks this way. Then they'll have this unfortunate female up before the magistrates on the double charge of *felo-de-se* and *felo-de-child*, and transport her for it to Dartmoor. So let us be moving. Now then, ma'am!'—he spoke to the woman, planting himself before her, legs apart, and his hands on his hips—'if you will pass your word that you won't play no more of these pranks, I'll let you go; if not, I'll tow you into custody myself.'

'No, sir, I won't do it no more,' said the miserable creature.

'Her sha'n't!' protested the child.

'What is to be done with them?' asked the pierman. 'They are both wet to the marrow of their bones.'

No one was prepared with an answer. One man, suspecting a subscription, tailed away.

'You must go home and have a change,' said the pierman kindly. 'And let me counsel a drop of hot grog. It will drive the chill out of you and the squealer.'

'I have no home—I have no change! I have nowhere and nothing,' answered the woman mournfully.

'There is that blessed institootion, the Work'us, always open,' said one man in a tone of sarcasm.

'I'd rather drown than go there,' answered she; 'there they'd take my Joanna from me.'

A grunt of assent.

'Her's got the proper principles of a Christian,' said the woman in the red petticoat. 'I'd go into Sutton Pool myself rather than into the House. I reckon in the matter of dirt they're about equal, only in the House it's moral, and in the Pool its physical.'

'Sither, lass,' said the skipper, in strong Yorkshire accent, 'how didst'a come here? Tell us all about it.'

'My husband died,' she answered timidly; 'I sold everything I had, bit by bit, till all was gone. I couldn't pay my rent, and I couldn't buy no food. I went from place to place after work, but I could get none. No one would give me a situation till I got rid of the child. All were in one song—"Send her to the Union." I couldn't do that; so I thought we'd both go to heaven together.'

'Have you no change of clothes anywhere?' asked Mrs. Thresher; 'because, if you have, you may change in my room, and I'll turn my old man out while you do it.'

'I've naught but what I stand up in,' said the poor creature, 'nor has Joanna, neither.'

'Now, then, my lads,' said the pierman, casting his eye round, 'I propose we raise a few shillings among us to rig out the pair afresh.'

'I reckon Mr. Lazarus can fit them out,' said one of the bystanders.

'O' course he can,' said the skipper; 'but he'll not do't wi'out brass. Here's half-a-crown to start wi'. Who'll give something upon that? Here's my cap as collecting-box.'

'It'll come expensive,' remarked a bargeman in sepulchral tones; 'I know what the rig-out of my missus costs me.'

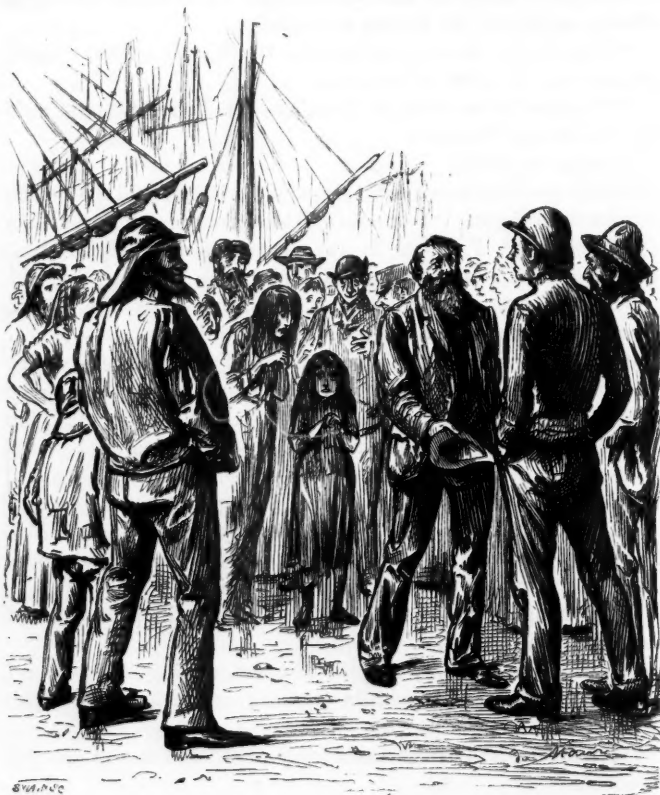
'A gown can be had secondhand for a trifle.'

'A gown ain't all,' said the bargeman mysteriously.

‘What else, then?’

‘What else? Why, there’s stays,’ growled the bargeman. ‘Them figures—new—seven and eightpence three-farthings!’

‘Then there’s a petticoat,’ suggested a pilot, timidly; ‘if you doubt my word look around at all the fluttering bunting. Women



must wear them things somehow, and they don’t use ’em as caps.’

‘A petticoat!’ exclaimed the north-country skipper. ‘Every respectable lass has two—one coloured, t’other white.’

‘Must the little maid have stays, too?’ asked the pierkeeper.

‘All females has stays,’ answered the bargeman. ‘Girls has ’em without bones. The bones come later in life.’

‘What more?’ asked the skipper.

A dead silence. The men were thinking and looking inquiringly at the dripping woman, who was too bewildered to reply.

‘Where is Mrs. Thresher? her can tell us,’ said the pilot.

But Mrs. Thresher was gone to her room to turn her old man out of it and prepare for the contingency of receiving the poor woman into it.

Still silence. The men’s brows were wrinkled with hard thought. It was broken by the rumbling bass of the bargeman. ‘Dress-improver!’

‘Must the little maid have one?’

‘Of course. All females have dress-improvers,’ said the bargeman, puffing and swelling with consciousness of superior knowledge. ‘Four-and-ten is about the figure.’

‘That makes five articles apiece, mates,’ said the pierkeeper, checking them off on his fingers: ‘thumb for gown, fore and middle fingers stand for petticoats, the last but one for stays, and the little chap is dress-improver. Now, then, mates, see what we can raise among us for the poor creatures.’

The party moved along the quay towards the pawnshop, the Yorkshire skipper revolving, cap in hand, among the members.

‘I’ve been considering,’ said he, after a while, ‘as how I might find the lass a berth aboard my vessel if she could get shut (rid) of the bairn. We could do wi’ a woman to cook and wash for us; and shoo might addle (earn) a few shillings that road. What do you think o’ that, mates? And what dost’a say to it thyself, lass?’

The dazed woman looked at the Yorkshireman without understanding his proposal. He repeated it in more intelligible form; then she comprehended it, and her wan face lighted up, only to dull again.

‘May I take my Joanna?’

‘That’s the scratch,’ said the skipper. ‘Shoo’s wick as a scoprill (lively as a teetotum), and I’d be glad if I could; but we can’t find room for little bairns.’

The pilot explained: ‘Can’t find room on board for little maidens.’

‘What is to become of my Joanna?’ asked the bewildered woman, looking with blank eyes about her.

The man with a vein of sarcasm in him, who had before suggested the Union, threw out another suggestion, likewise ironical.

‘As you’re about to get clothes of Mr. Lazarus, perhaps you can pawn the child to him, and raise a few shillings on her!’

The suggestion elicited a general laugh. The woman, however, took it seriously, and walked towards the pawnbroker’s shop, drawing the child along with her.

‘Here is t’ brass a’ve gotten together for thee,’ said the skipper, pouring the coin from his cap into her hand. ‘Take it, and get the ten articles thyself.’

Then he signed to the others to withdraw, and they, with great delicacy, did so, whilst the woman entered the pawnbroker’s shop.

‘Mates,’ said the skipper, ‘leave the lass to do the shopping alone. It’s more decent. She’ll get the ten articles. Trust a woman to bargain. And whilst shoo’s aboot it we’ll put heads together and consider what is to be done wi’ the little bairn.’

‘Did you hear her scream?’ asked the pilot.

‘Her’d do as a syren (steam whistle) to an ironclad, and rouse the Three Towns (Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport) when coming into harbour.’

‘Scream!’ exclaimed another man, ‘I should like to know what man or woman but the old lady under the umbrella by the ginger-beer could fail to hear her. Mark my words! That little maid ain’t born to be drowned. How her worked her way up the chain out o’ the slime! Well,’ sententiously, ‘there be other chains than that in this world; and may she work herself up the next she catches as well as she went up that!’

CHAPTER II.

PAWNED.

THE woman entered the shop of Mr. Lazarus. When there she stood trembling and looking down, confused or frightened, whilst the child at her side peered about with eager eyes at the articles with which the shop was crowded.

Mr. Lazarus was a dark man, of distinct Israelitish type, his hair cut short, like moleskin, but his jaws and chin covered with a bristly scrub. He was wont to shave once a week, and went bristly and black between times. His eye ran over the customer, and took stock of what she wore. He soon satisfied himself that she had nothing about her in his way, except a gold wedding-ring.

Mr. Lazarus looked suspiciously and threateningly at the

child. He detested children. They played marbles, ball, tip-cat on the pavement, and broke his windows. They shouted after him, 'Rags and bones!' or 'Old clo'!' through their noses, or put their heads into his shop, and asked how he was off for soap, or 'Any black puddings or bacon rashers to-day?'

The pawnbroker was frequently engaged, behind his counter, whittling at a stick, lying in wait to rush forth with it upon the urchins who offended him. It was rarely, however, that he caught the delinquents. He more often fell upon, or fell over, an inoffensive and unoffending child, and rattled his stick about its sides. Then the parents—the mother certainly—would appear on the scene and join in the noise, belabouring Mr. Lazarus with her tongue. When matters reached this point, Mr. Lazarus would return to his shop, with the stick tucked under his arm, growling Levitical imprecations.

'What do you want?' asked Mr. Lazarus, looking up from an account-book, and laying the stick on the table.

'Please, sir,' answered the woman in a faint, frightened voice, 'I want a set of dry clothes for myself and Joanna.'

'Certainly,' answered the Jew with alacrity. 'Tumbled into the Pool, eh? About what figure, pray?'

'This is all I have,' answered she, extending her hand and opening it.

'One half-crown, two shillings, one'—he rang it—'bad, two sixpences, and eight threepenny bits, also one French ha'penny, which don't pass current. I return you the shilling. You may be able to get others to take it, less wideawake. That makes six-and-six. Can't do much for you at that price.'

Then the poor creature said, 'Please, sir, you'll be liberal, I hope. I've nothing else, and am wet to the marrow. I have brought the child. I thought to raise a few shillings on her.'

'The child! What do you mean?'

'My darling, my Joanna.'

Mr. Lazarus turned a green hue.

'You're trying to make sport of me!' he exclaimed, clutching at his stick. 'You've been put up to it. I won't stand this sort of game. Get out at once.'

'Please, sir,' said the woman, trembling with cold and alarm, 'the gentleman outside as fished me from the Pool got up a subscription for me, that I might have dry clothes. I've no more, but if you'd consent to take the child——'

'I take the child!—I—I!' screamed Mr. Lazarus. 'Children are the plague of my life. I wouldn't have one if offered for nothing.'

'Then, sir, I must take the money elsewhere.'

'Oh!' said the pawnbroker, 'six-and-six is it? Pity it should be lost. Do you think the gentlemen would subscribe a little more? The charitable feelings, when well worked, are very yielding. If you'd make believe to be desperate, and about to fall or throw yourself in again, maybe the collecting cap would go round again, and the sum disposable mount to eleven-and-six. At eleven-and-six I might consider you. I can't so much as look at you for six-and-six. Just cast your eyes over this myrtle-green trimmed with cream lace! Don't it make your mouth water?'

'I'm watering all over,' sighed the woman. 'I only want ordinary dry clothes.'

'Or this Dolly Varden with panniers, a little passed in style, and a kiss-me-quick bonnet. Make you quite irresistible, miss—beg pardon—ma'am, I mean.'

'I have no more. I can get no more. I need only a cotton dress and underclothing.'

'Lor' bless you!' exclaimed the Jew, 'what does that latter signify so long as the gown is gorgeous? Try to screw some more from the gents outside. If you cried, now, in a proper heart-rending way?'

The woman shook her head despairingly. 'I did not ask for this. I want only necessities. Why did they not let me drown, and be at rest?'

'What, ma'am?' said the Jew. 'Drown with an available six-and-six on the quay awaiting you! The thing is ridiculous!'

'Please, sir, will you take the child?'

'What do you mean?' asked Lazarus testily, turning green again.

'I mean my Joanna,' answered the woman, pointing to the little girl at her side.

Mr. Lazarus waxed wroth 'Do I take little girls? Eh! look round and see what are the articles in my shop. Dolls; yes, they don't eat. China figures; yes, they don't wear out clothes. I'm not a cannibal. Can't make butcher's meat out of children. I wish I might. I'd set up shambles and reduce their numbers.'

'I don't want to sell Joanna,' said the woman in a dull, distressed voice, 'I wouldn't sell her for a thousand guineas. But I thought, no offence, I might pawn her for a time, so as to make up the difference, and get a fit out of dry clothes for both of us.'

'Be off with you! This is no foundling hospital where every troublesome child may be left. Get out of this, or I'll rattle my stick about the bones of the monkey.'

'I have nowhere to go to, sir. I have passed my word not to fling myself into the sea again. You shall have Joanna, sir, for half-a-sovereign.'

'Half-a-sovereign!' cried Mr. Lazarus, starting back. 'Have I human ears to hear such a proposition? Half-a-sovereign for a little maggot that'll eat her own weight of nourishing victuals every day! I won't have her at any price. Chuck her into Sutton Pool.'

'I won't be drowned,' said the child resolutely.

'I throwed her in once, and her crawled out like a spider running along its cobweb.'

'Do with her what you will. I'll have nothing to say to her,' cried the angry pawnbroker. Then working himself into fury, 'Will you be off? Look what a pond you two have made in my shop. The floor is swimming. A mop won't take it up in a week; and all the iron-ware, and the forks and knives, will be rusted, and the cloth and leather mildewed.'

'Well, sir,' sighed the woman, 'give me back the money, and I'll go.'

'Six-and-six!' said Mr. Lazarus in a softer tone, 'six-and-six is six-and-six. Can't we deal reasonably and quietly? What is the advantage of your working yourself up into fever and fury?'

'Please, sir,' said the woman with pertinacity, such as could hardly be looked for in one so timid and dazed, 'I can have a situation if I get rid of the child.'

'Well, what is that to me?'

'I won't sell her, sir! and I won't send her to the Union. If you'll be so kind as to take her, and lend me half-a-sovereign on her, I'll throw in my wedding-ring beside.'

'Let me look at it. I dare be sworn it is brass.'

'We were well off when us married, and could afford it,' explained the woman. Then, whilst the Jew was examining the ring, and testing it with acid, she said, 'My Joanna is of pure gold. You'd better take her, sir. You'd never repent. I reckon she can do most things. Her can wash——'

'I have no washing done here,' said Lazarus, shortly. 'Never found the need. The Barbican is poisoned with the smell of yellow soap and the reek of drying linen.'

‘Then, sir, her can cook you a rasher of bacon——’

‘I never eat of the pig,’ screamed Lazarus, and spat on the floor.

‘Her can kindle a fire——’

‘And waste tons of coal.’

‘Her can nurse the babies——’

‘I’ve no babies. I don’t want ’em. I wouldn’t have ’em.’

‘Her can run messages like a greyhound, and mind the shop when you are out; and should burglars try to break in, her would scream, and scream, and scream.’

‘Eh!’ said Lazarus, looking up, interested. ‘Was that she screaming half-an-hour ago?’

‘It was. Her can scream when proper. Other times she’s as still as a mouse.’

Mr. Lazarus considered for a few moments. He rubbed his bristly chin, blew his nose in a fashion almost lost in this age of refinement. Then he leaned both elbows on the counter and stared at the girl. Mr. Lazarus was nervous about burglars. Unwittingly the mother had touched a fibre in his soul that quivered. Report credited him with vast wealth, with money, plate, jewellery, stored in the crazy old house. More than once he had been alarmed by attempts to break in. He had an infirmity which he could not master. He slept so soundly that nothing woke him. The Barbican was a noisy place by night as well as by day. Topsy sailors rambled about it, drunken women squabbled, foreign sailors fought on the quay. The ear in time became so accustomed to noises that they ceased to disturb. Lazarus had resolved to get a dog, but begrudged the food it would consume. Following this train of thought, he said to himself, ‘Half-a-sov! I could get a mongrel pup for less.’

‘Sir,’ argued the woman, ‘with a pup you wouldn’t get a gold wedding-ring.’

‘That is true, but a dog eats bones, and girls eat meat.’

‘Oh! my Joanna hasn’t had much of that. A crust of bread and some dripping—her never gets beyond that. Besides, you’d have to pay tax on a dog, not on a girl.’

‘That also is true, but a dog grows his own coat, and a girl grows out of every suit you put her into.’

‘The girl is a golden girl, gold through and through,’ said the mother. ‘She wakes early, and has her hand in work all day; is never idle, never plays, never neglects a duty; try her.’

Mr. Lazarus came from behind the counter, put his hand under Joanna's chin, and thrust the wet hair from her brow. He pursed up his lips, half closed his eyes, and studied her critically.

Then Joanna, surmising that Mr. Lazarus was about to relent, put forth her full powers of resistance. She clawed at his coat, which being rusty gave way; she bit at his hands, and made them bleed; she kicked his shins, and forced him to caper; and she yelled, as surely no mortal lungs had yelled before.

The men outside drew near the shop, flattened their noses against the window-panes and looked in, then grinned, rubbed their hands, laughed in each other's faces, and said: 'Her's born to make a noise in the world, no mistake—an irrepressible.' Then they backed. The screams pierced the drums of their ears like bradawls.

Joanna danced and tore, and shrieked and writhed. 'I am not good,' she cried; 'I am not golden. I am bad, and brazen. I'm a little devil. Don't buy me. I'm worth nothing at all. I scream all day. All night as well. No one can sleep in the house where I am. I never work. I scat (break) all the cloam (crockery). I smash the windows. I set a house on fire. I'm a devil; I'm a devil.'

In vain did the poor mother reason with, and try to pacify the child. The little creature was as one possessed. She shook herself in convulsions of rage, so that the water spirted off her, as from a poodle drying itself after a bath.

Mr. Lazarus was fain to put the counter between himself and the child. He was not angry; he looked on approvingly.

'With burglars,' said he, nodding to the mother, 'this would be first-rate.'

Then the girl tore round the shop, kicking the counter, and dashing against the goods piled in the corners.

'Look here!' said Mr. Lazarus. 'Do you see all these walking-sticks? Thorn and bamboo they are. I'll try their respective merits on your ribs, you wild cat, unless you desist.' Then to the mother, 'She will do. I take her. You shall have the money. I must stop the noise first; there is no dealing because of it.'

Then, feebly assisted by the woman, the pawnbroker carried the child, kicking, tearing, howling, into the kitchen, to the coal-hole, into which he thrust her. Then he tried to lock her in, but she dashed herself against the door, and beat the lock when

he attempted to fasten it. After many efforts he succeeded in turning the key.

'There,' said he, 'squall yourself hoarse. Bang your hands and knees raw. No one will heed.'

He returned to the shop with the mother, who was trembling and crying.

He shut the kitchen door, and the shop door leading into the house likewise; nevertheless the cries and thumpings from the coalhole were still audible, though distant and muffled.

Mr. Lazarus wiped his brow. 'There is life in the child. There are will and pertinacity,' he said. 'She knows her own mind, which is more than do many. Here is the half-sovereign.'

'Thank you, sir. You understand, I don't sell her.'

'Of course not, of course not.'

'I only pawn her,' said the woman, timidly.

'To be sure, to be sure.'

'And, sir, I want my ticket.'

'What ticket?'

'The pawn-ticket, sir, so that when I bring the money I may have my child back out of pawn.'

'By all means,' said Mr. Lazarus. 'And when shall we say the time is up?'

'Well, sir, if I may make it seven years, I'll take it as a favour. Joanna is now twelve, and in seven she'll be nineteen. I may be able to redeem her in a few months, but I cannot tell. I'm going away in a ship, and I don't know where to. I should like a margin, so as to give me plenty of time to look about, and scrape.'

'Certainly,' said Mr. Lazarus. 'Seven years let it be. The interest will be ten per cent. A shilling a year. In seven years that will be seven shillings for interest. I'll write you out the ticket at once. Hand me over the wedding-ring again. You took it up just now. The half-sovereign and the six-and-six—less twopence for the ticket, that makes sixteen-and-four. This is what you want to lay out in dry clothes. We will see if we can suit you. The myrtle-green and cream lace won't do. Style unbecoming. Something warm and useful. I understand. Here is the ticket. Number six hundred and seventeen your daughter is, ma'am. Six hundred and seventeen. Now your name, please?'

'Marianne Rosevere.'

'And my little maid is——'

'Six hundred and seventeen.'

CHAPTER III.

LAZARUS.

WHEN the mother was gone, with dry and decent garments, and the drumming and roaring at the cellar door had ceased, Mr. Lazarus went to the coalhole and unlocked it.

Then Joanna walked forth. She had gone in wet; she emerged caked in coal-dust, black as a sweep. Clothing, hands, face, hair, were all black. Nothing was clean about her but the white of her eyes, her red lips and shining teeth.

Mr. Lazarus held the door and stood back. He expected her to fly forth, snapping and snarling like a spiteful dog. He feared for his shins, and therefore held a stick for protection. But Joanna came forth composedly, without a word.

'I must confess,' said the pawnbroker, reassured, 'you *do* look like a little devil. I don't think you could come it more natural, got up for the occasion with theatrical properties.'

'I am not a little devil,' said the girl, standing in the midst of the kitchen, and looking at Mr. Lazarus. 'I am a girl; I am not bad, I am good; I am gold, not brass; I am not idle, I work hard; I rise early; I break nothing; I knit; I sew; I cook; I scream. Where is my mother? Is she gone?'

'Gone, gone right away on end. She has pawned you to me for seven years; raised ten shillings on you—more than you are worth, if coined.'

'I am worth more than ten shillings; I am worth ten pounds.'

'You understand you can't go to mother; you are pawned. If your mother does not come back in seven years, then you fall to me altogether as my own. Do you understand?'

'Yes,' said the girl. 'Mother has pawned everything else she had down to me. Now is my turn. I will stay.'

'Your number is six hundred and seventeen. Look in my ledger; there you are till cancelled. Why did you scream so horribly?'

'Because I wanted to be with mother.'

'And now you are content to remain with me?'

'I am pawned; I can't help myself. Mother has raised the money on me. I must stay till she returns with the ticket and the half-sovereign.'

'And the interest—the interest at ten per cent.,' insisted Mr. Lazarus.

'I know nothing about that,' said the girl. 'I will stay till mother brings the money. I cannot help myself.'

'Come along, you squalling cockatoo,' said the pawnbroker; 'I will show you over the place, and tell you what your work will be. This is the kitchen.'

'And that is your nose. I have eyes. You wouldn't make me believe this a parlour if you swore to it.'

'You are a queer imp.'

'I am good,' said the girl. 'I will cook the dinner, and then you will say the same.'

'No waste of coals here,' observed Lazarus gravely. 'To think of the profligate waste among the rich! The tons of coal they burn; nothing to show for it but smoke and ashes! I never turned a penny by coals in all my life, never.'

'I have,' said Joanna.

'I shall be glad to hear how you managed that.'

'It was this way. We'd a little garden ran down to the water, where the coal-barges went by. I corked an empty sodawater bottle and hung it to the branch of an apple-tree. When the bargemen went by they couldn't hold off having a shy at the bottle, and they shied lumps of coal. I went out every day with a shovel. We kept the kitchen fire with that bottle, and the beauty was she never broke. Couldn't, you understand, because her swung when hit.'

Lazarus looked at the child with admiration. 'Beautiful! upon my word, beautiful! You are a genius, Six hundred and seventeen. Follow me.'

He led her into the shop. 'There,' he said, 'you sleep under the counter. There are blankets about to make a bed of. Only mind everything goes back into place in the morning; nothing torn and no tickets off.'

'I understand.'

'Look at me. You see I hold a stick that I've been whittling. Not out of ornament, I tell you, but for use. Now rack your brains for a reason.'

'To lick me with,' said the girl.

'Hit it, Six hundred and seventeen. If you tear, break, or waste anything, this stick will be a paintbrush to your back, making you like an ancient Briton, blue and yellow. Now look at this stick. You don't suppose I whittle and shape it for such as you; you ain't worth the exertion.'

'You thought me worth ten bob, or you wouldn't have given it,' said the child.

'You worth ten shillings!' sneered the Jew; 'not a bit. Your mother gave her gold ring as well; that was worth six.'

'Well, then, I'm valued at four.'

'Four! You're worth nothing. I reckoned on your clothes and boots.'

'My boots are scat at the sides, and wore out at the soles. They are fit for nothing but making soup. My clothes are that dirty with mud and coals that they'll never wash clean again.'

'What! given to argufying, are you?' exclaimed the pawnbroker. 'No more of that with me. Hook up the steps if you please, you blackbeetle. I must find you a change somehow.'

He made her ascend a set of dark steps into an upper story. There they went through three rooms, full as they could hold of various goods, old furniture, clocks, china, mattresses, looking-glasses, military accoutrements, uniforms, muffs, jackets, gowns, nautical instruments, books, tools.

'There,' said he, pointing about him with his stick, 'you see all these garments. This is the uniform of a general, that of an admiral. Here are sable and sealskin jackets, rabbitskin ermine opera cloaks, silk dresses for servant-maids, and cotton prints for ladies, linen jackets of dockmen, worsted jerseys of sailors. These must all be hung on yokes. They accumulate. Unless exposed they don't attract attention. I fashion the yokes and pegs on which they hang. That is what I was whittling at. I always have one in hand. I have one great enemy with which to battle. These clothes don't eat, but they get eaten. The moth is my enemy. I said he was a great one, but really he's a very little one. Bless me! what valuable time is wasted at whack, whack, whack! with a bamboo to drive the moth out of the cloth and fur. I've tried camphor; I've tried bitter apple; I've tried pepper. Nothing answers but the bamboo. Now you know what will be one of your regular duties—duties! pleasures, exercises. You will have to beat the clothes every day for a couple of hours. If after this I find a moth I'll beat you, whack, whack, whack, with the bamboo, till I've beat the laziness out of you. You are intelligent.' You can understand plain English, I suppose?'

Joanna nodded.

'You will have to work hard in this house,' said Mr. Lazarus further. He had beaten a carpet to illustrate his meaning, and

raised a cloud of dust that made him cough. 'No idleness is tolerated here. No spare hours are given during which you may slip into mischief. Not much food to fire the blood and make you want it. You will rise at five and get me a cup of coffee. No lighting of fires, mind. The coffee is made in an Etna. Then you beat the clothes in the back yard till the shop opens. About noon the fire is kindled and dinner is cooked for me. You can eat what I leave. There is often gravy in which to sop bread. Gravy is nourishing. I don't consume it all myself. I am not greedy. Children only are greedy. In the afternoon you mind the shop, and mend what clothes are torn. About five o'clock I shall want a cup of tea. I take bread and cheese for supper at nine. My teeth are bad. I don't eat the crusts and rinds; you may have them, and be grateful. There are many poor children with less. I had forgotten. You must have a change of clothes.' He looked carefully about among the female garments. 'There,' said he, 'I don't think I could dispose of these traps; they are much worn. I bought 'em cheap; came off a girl as died of scarlet fever. Look sharp; go behind a heap of furniture, off with your wet and coaly rags, and tumble into these beauties. Then, if you like, you may wash your face and hands at the pump. Water costs no money. I allow no soap.'

Joanna did not take many minutes in changing. She went into the back yard—this house had one—and soused her head and arms well. Then she returned with the utmost promptitude to her master.

'I couldn't find a comb,' she said, 'so I used a broken kitchen fork.'

'That's right,' answered the Jew approvingly; 'never ask for two things where one will suffice.'

Mr. Lazarus relaxed into amiability. He was pleased with the ready instinct of the child to meet his views.

'Let me tell you,' he said, 'when you've been a good girl, and worked hard and eaten next to nothing, I'll allow you, as a treat, to put on the general's uniform, sword, epaulette, and all; or the admiral's, with his cocked hat; or my lady's silk and ermine, bare arms and low body. It will be as good as going to the play, and it will air the suits also, and prevent them getting mouldy.'

Joanna clapped her hands and laughed.

'There is one thing further,' said Lazarus. 'You'll have to go to bed in the dark, winter and summer. I never allow waste of

candle. Who knows? you might take to reading in bed—under the counter—and set everything in a blaze. Why, bless me! if this establishment caught, the fire would run through it. Nothing in the world would arrest the flames. Now you may go down stairs. No—stay. There is one point more to particularise. I spend a penny every week in getting shaved, and fourpence a quarter in having my hair cut. That amounts to five-and-fourpence in the twelvemonth—clear waste, nothing to show for it. You will have to learn to shave me and cut my hair. Here is an old muff that the moth has played the mischief with. I don't think it will sell. Practise on that. Lather it first, and then work along it gently with a razor. You'll soon get into the way, and save me five-and-four per annum. Only—mind! Don't waste the soap!'

In all the many years that Emmanuel Lazarus had done business he had never made so good a bargain as when he took Joanna in pawn. Ten shillings! She was worth to him over ten pounds a year, that is two thousand per cent. interest. He soon discovered her worth, and congratulated himself on having secured her.

Joanna worked from grey dawn to late at night harder than any day-labourer. She slept under the counter, and slept so lightly that at the least alarm of burglars she woke and screamed loud enough to scare away the rogues, arouse the neighbours, and collect the police.

She dusted the weevils out of their lurking-places; not a grub could conceal itself under the felling; the bamboo reduced it to pulp. Not a moth could spread wing; it was clapped to dust between her palms. Wherever, in cloth, dress, or fur cloak, she spied a rent, her dexterous needle mended it so neatly that it remained unperceived by purchasers. She never forgot to lock the doors, bar and bell the windows, at night. Her clothing cost nothing, and was always neat, so well was it washed, so neatly was it mended, darned and patched. As she was denied coals, she washed the house linen and her own garments in cold water.

When winter set in, Joanna found means of economising that had not entered the brain of Lazarus. Charitable people had instituted a soup-kitchen. The girl had gone thither with her mother in their abject poverty. She went there now clothed in rags, and brought away sufficient nourishing broth to form the

staple of her own and her master's dinner. Some potatoes and bread completed the meal. No one supposed that the wretched girl with worn face and appealing eyes was the maid-of-all-work to the rich Jew pawnbroker and money-lender of the Barbican.

Joanna had dark hair and large shining dark eyes too big for her face ; the face was thin and sharp, but well cut. She was but twelve years old, therefore only a child ; but the face was full of precocious shrewdness. The eyes twinkled, gleamed, flashed. Wonderful eyes, knowing eyes, without softness in them ; eyes that saw everything, measured and valued everything, that went into those she encountered and found out their weakness. Her face was without colour, but the skin was clear and transparent.

'Who and what are you, my child?' asked a charitable woman once at the soup-kitchen.

'I'm a pawn—Six hundred and seventeen!' she replied, and disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

JOANNA'S SCHOOL.

SEVEN months after Joanna had been left in pawn with Mr. Lazarus, the Yorkshire skipper was again in Plymouth with a load of coals from Goole. He came to the shop to see the girl, and tell her about her mother. Captain Hull—that was his name—had bad news to communicate. Mrs. Rosevere had probably caught cold from her immersion, when she tried to drown herself, and on her voyage northward had been taken ill. On reaching Goole, she was carried on shore and sent to the nearest hospital, where she had been pronounced ill with rheumatic fever.

After that Mr. Hull had been to Belgium for iron. There had been a strike at Middlesborough, and the furnaces had been let out, and the ironmasters had executed their contracts by purchasing their iron at Verviers. When next Captain Hull came to Goole and inquired after the woman, he learned that she had been discharged, but whither she had gone, and what was her present address, he was unable to ascertain. Joanna was much troubled. She had a tender spot in her heart. She was passionately devoted to her mother. Not a line had reached her from Mrs. Rosevere. Whether she were alive or dead she could not tell. She cried bitterly at night under the counter, and could not sleep for

sobs. But she did not allow the skipper to see her tears. She shook and turned white when he told his tale, and then fled to the kitchen to conceal her emotion.

'Ah!' said the pawnbroker, when she had disappeared, 'this is my fate. I advanced ten shillings on the child, and now she is thrown on my hands. This is the second time this sort of thing has occurred—before it was white mice.'

'What about the white mice?'

'I advanced money on a couple of white mice to a schoolboy, and was not repaid. I had to feed those mice for weeks, and they cost me a fortune. I put them in the window, but, though it brought all the Barbican children to the glass, there came no buyer. At last I was forced to drown them, to be rid of the daily burden of their maintenance. The law won't let me deal like that with children. I'll never advance money on live animals again—never. I've been bitten twice, once by the mice, now by the girl. Ten shillings! I gave a half-sovereign in gold. I shall never see the colour of the coin again.'

'Now, Mr. Lazarus, speak nobut the truth. You gave ne'er a penny in cash. It was all took out in clothes.'

'Was it? Dear me, I had forgot. Well, it does not matter. I made a bad bargain. The creature eats with a voracity perfectly appalling. Did you ever see a cow or a horse in a meadow, how it goes on, never stopping? It is just the same with this child. The cost of her food is frightful, the cost of her clothes sickening. She outgrows her dresses as fast as they are fitted on her. Why did I take her? Why was I such a fool? This is what comes of having a feeling heart. Take her away, Mr. Hull, take her away, chuck her as ballast into the bilge-water in your hold. I've had her seven months, now it is your turn.'

'I—I!' stammered the good-natured skipper, 'I am nae responsible for t' little lass.'

'You are. You sent her here. Your persuaded the mother to put her with me, and offered her a place in your vessel. As you took the mother, you're part bound for the child. Now I've had enough of her gorging herself on butcher's meat, and swilling bottled ale, and burning candles at both ends, and flaunting in silks and satins.'

'None so much o' t' latter, I take it, Mr. Lazarus.'

'Only on Sundays, I allow. But, consider, Mr. Hull, a child can neither be clothed *in* nor *on* nothing. You, by the cut of

you, I take to be a married man, and know what the cost of dressing children comes to.'

'This is but one bairn.'

'I know that; but this child is a girl, and girls cost more in clothes than boys.'

'Shoo works for you.'

'Works! Not she—Loiters about the Barbican playing with the boys and girls at hopscotch and prisoners' base. Works! I've paid for her schooling.'

'Does she go to t' National school?'

'National school!' jeered the Jew. 'A first-rate private school. She is slow at learning. I wish I could extract from her sufficient work to pay for her schooling. Take her away. I'll turn her out of doors if you don't. Not under half-a-sovereign would I consent to retain her.'

Mr. Hull considered for a while, then thrust his hand into his pocket and drew forth some money. 'If this be but a matter o' brass,' he said, 'take it. But I tell thee, I don't acknowledge the responsibility.'

'Very well,' said the Jew, 'I've a feeling heart, and I accept the trifle. It don't cover her breakages. I had as beautiful a pair of oriental jars as you might wish to see. They were worth fifty pounds. The child knocked one over with a broom. What did she have a broom in her hand for? Cobwebs! Cobwebs don't hurt. Spiders break no china. Brooms does. Now there is but one jar remaining, and that is worth seven-and-six, because the pair is broken. That is a loss to a poor man. Take seven-and-six from fifty pounds, and it leaves forty-nine pounds twelve and six. You wouldn't like to lose forty-nine pounds twelve and six of a morning, would you, Mr. Hull? You see what sacrifices one makes through having a feeling heart. Mr. Hull, I'll take the money, and set it off against the breakages: you contribute ten shillings and I forty-nine pounds twelve and six.'

Mr. Hull grew red, and fumbled in his pocket. 'Dang it!' said he, 'here's another half-sovereign.'

'Thank you, captain, thank you. You understand, it don't release her from pawn. The mother pawned her, and has the ticket.'

'Oh, I don't want t' bairn out. Keep her till her mother redeems her. I'm a'most feared though t' old lass is dead. Shoo were but a weakly creetur' at best.'

‘I’ll keep her till then,’ said Lazarus, and added to himself, ‘I wouldn’t do without her for five-and-twenty pounds.’

As Mr. Lazarus said, Joanna was at school, and the school was the private establishment of Mr. Lazarus, in which he was head and second master and usher rolled into one, and in which she was the only scholar. Consequently on her was concentrated the full teaching power of the academy. She knew her letters and could sum when she came there, but her knowledge of men and the world was rudimentary. This was the speciality of Mr. Lazarus’s teaching. Under his tuition she rapidly acquired an insight into the shady ways of the world and acquaintance with the skeletons in the cupboards of a good many houses in Plymouth.

Joanna also gained insight into her master’s business, and unfolded a remarkable aptitude for it. The business was one that ramified in all directions, a fungous, cancerous growth with fibres extracting nutriment from every social bed.

Mr. Lazarus visited extravagant ladies at their homes, and lent them money on their diamonds. He gave out coppers on the flat-irons of drunken washerwomen. He took the gold repeaters of officers and the tools of artisans. He lent money on bills of sale, notes of hand, and post-obits. He was yielding about renewals.

The house was crowded from garret to cellar with articles of every description on which money had been advanced, or which had been seized in default of payment. A retentive memory was in demand to recollect where anything was, when wanted by a depositor, who came, money in hand, to release it; to know what pledges had lapsed, and when, without hunting them out of the ledger.

Dealers of various kinds visited Mr. Lazarus: slop-shop men to purchase a lot of secondhand clothing, curiosity dealers to overhaul his china and engravings, jewellers for his watches and rings and bracelets, furniture-makers to buy up cracked mahogany-veneered chests of drawers for conversion into Florentine antiques by coating them with Dutch marquetry.

Thus the goods in Mr. Lazarus’s establishment went into circulation. Old things went and new came. But there always remained some deposit which no tide swept away, and which lay as a burden on the Jew’s mind. The articles occupied space and were unsaleable. Joanna applied her mind to the solution of this difficulty, and showed a rare sagacity in converting them into usable, and therefore saleable goods, and thus launching them.

As Joanna grew up, and grew into the business, she exhibited a rare talent in negotiating with both sellers and purchasers. She did not become the right hand of Lazarus, only because he had no right hand. Even he, with his long experience, was unable to surpass her in disparagement of articles offered, in shaming a poor pledger into yielding them for a trifle. The expressions she threw into her face, the scorn that quivered in her finger-tips, the keenness of eyesight that overlooked no defect, cowed the spirit of the pledger, and took the value out of the piece of goods before a word was spoken. On the other hand, in treating with dealers, her genius was equally conspicuous. She praised the articles, dexterously disguised their defects, flattered and cajoled the purchasers, and sent them away to find that they had been overreached. But what delighted Joanna especially was to have to do with an amateur antiquary or china fancier: then she became simplicity itself, profoundly ignorant of the real value of rare articles, and she sent the greenhorns off deluding themselves that they had secured treasures 'in a poky out-of-the-way odds-and-ends shop,' when they had paid heavy gold for utter rubbish.

Joanna, as has been said, developed admirable skill in turning unsaleable goods into articles of commerce. We give one instance. Mr. Lazarus was unable to resist the temptation of purchasing, at a low figure, a large number of scarlet uniforms slightly damaged and discoloured. No one would buy the red-cloth jackets. Joanna unpicked them, sent them into the dye-vat, and with a pair of scissors and a needle and black thread converted them into fashionable short coats. The breast of one made the tail of another.

The demand for Mr. Lazarus's Rinking, Lorne, and Brighton suits, at a price with which the ready-made dealers could not compete, soon exceeded the supply.

When one of H.M. vessels was put in commission the mess was furnished with new linen, plate, china, glass. When discharged—sometimes at the end of a few months—everything was sold off at miserably low prices. Mr. Lazarus was a large and constant purchaser at these sales. Sometimes he took the entire lot in a lump, by negotiation, without auction. Then he and Joanna went over all the acquisitions with care. The markings were removed from the linen. If the tablecloths were much cut, they were converted into napkins; if slightly injured, Joanna darned and disguised the cuts. The plate was subjected to much

polishing, till it bore the appearance of new, or was redipped and sold as new—possibly to the same vessel when recommissioned. The glass was sorted into complete lots; the knives and china found their way among the poor.

In their views of life Joanna and her master agreed perfectly; but then Joanna's mind had been formed by Mr. Lazarus, and she drank in his doctrines as freely as he let her drink water.



Mr. Lazarus was a conscientious man in a way. He instructed Joanna in morals. He taught her that great sin would lie at her door if she acted towards himself dishonestly, and untruthfully and wastefully.

They had ample opportunity for exchanging ideas whilst feather-picking.

The pawnbroker received many pillows and bed-tyes as pledges. When he did so he slit them at a seam, put in his

hand and extracted feathers; from a pillow he withdrew one handful, from a bed four. In their place he put hay, so as not to alter their weight. Then Joanna sewed up the seams so neatly that it could not be told they had been opened; and the feathers were stored in chests to be sold at tenpence per pound. Whilst thus engaged Joanna and her master discussed the world, the profligacy of the rich, the meanness of the poor, the greed of rival pawnbrokers, the universal corruption of men and morals.

What was the world coming to, when debtors bolted to America, and when those on whose furniture Mr. Lazarus had made advances 'flitted' by moonlight, leaving him out of pocket, without power of recovery? What was the world coming to, when the police poked their noses into his shop, and found there stolen goods, which they carried off, in spite of his having paid hard cash for them, or were extortionate in their demand for palm-greasing, to overlook the purchases? What was the world coming to, when charitable institutions were allowed to come to the aid of the distressed—clothing-clubs, coal-clubs, savings' banks—and hold them back from flying to their proper refuge, the Golden Balls? What was the world coming to, when the Jews were becoming so numerous and so unscrupulous as to interfere with one another's business? And what was the world coming to, when Gentiles were becoming a match for Jews in plucking the geese, and shearing the silly sheep, that asked to be plucked and shorn?

Thus Joanna grew up under this schooling, and the teaching became the grain of her mind. There was natural aptitude to receive it, but the aptitude was that of an active, eager, intelligent mind, ready to assimilate any instruction given it, with daily opportunity for testing and exercising it.

She was entirely without sympathy with her fellows. She looked upon men as the prey on which the clever lived; they were fair game when brought within reach through necessity or imbecility. Of human nature she had a low opinion, but she was brought into contact with no noble specimens.

Lazarus was without tenderness towards her; she grew up with no one to love, no one to love her, consequently there was no sympathy, pity, softness about her. The one leading motive of Lazarus's life seemed to be Individualism. He thought, worked only for himself. He concerned himself about no one; he was indifferent to the sufferings of mankind. His code of ethics was based on self. That was right which did him good, that was wrong

which did him harm. He insisted to Joanna that the secret of success lay in rigidly attending to self-interest; that the failures of men were due to their yielding to their good-nature, to their vibration between self-interest and the care for others.

Thus passed several years. Joanna grew in stature, and her mind accommodated itself to what was exacted of it. She became indispensable to her master, but he was too shrewd to let her see how highly he appreciated her. No further news reached the Barbican about her mother. The skipper no more returned to Plymouth.

Still Joanna clung to the belief that her mother lived, and would return and redeem her before the lapse of the seven years.

(To be continued.)



THE FIRE BRIGADE.

No idea of the working of the old fire establishment of London, in the days before its organisation by Mr. Braidwood, can be better conveyed than by watching the volunteers (who have enthusiastically taken upon themselves the guardianship of the lives and property of their fellow-citizens from fire) at exercise in a country town; either when they dauntlessly throw their escape ladders against the blank wall of the Wesleyan chapel, and the butcher with weak knees, swarming halfway in trepidation, has himself to be rescued by the hairdresser in the helmet of his predecessor; or when, at the call of their chief, the popular Tory squire, they rattle out two miles on the highway and turn their hose on to his lawn-tennis court, where, in the long summer drought, there are cracks yawning like the gulf of Curtius. They have not been thus out together in force since the squire's eldest son came of age, when they startled his guests at the ball by putting in an appearance at midnight with full steam and Bengal lights; but that does not prevent them from sitting the engine as though they were accustomed to it, and not as though they were as usual coming for orders, nor from running about with axes and wrenches and getting in each other's way, just as though there were really a disaster imminent, and they were likely to be of use. The engine is driven down to the pond, and the hose is laid across the fields up to the tennis-court; the chief, in a silver helmet, ruefully inspects from a distance the *grandes eaux* squirting from the lengths, which are split every half-dozen yards; the maids look on from the shrubbery, occasionally fired at by Tom Boxer, of the 'Red Lion,' who directs the water; and though it is true that from the time of their appearance in the drive to the clenching of the last length of hose there is an interval almost large enough in which to burn down the house and begin to think of arrangements for rebuilding it, it cannot be denied that they do the tennis-court good and provide much innocent amusement. When their labours are over, and the engine has ceased to palpitate down by the pond, they go to supper in the servants' hall; and there to a late hour may be heard échoing the melodies of Tom Boxer, and the halting murmurs of speech-making. They return in the early morning smoking

cigars, their helmets in their laps, and it is only late in the afternoon that one or two of the most energetic find time to go and clean the engine. This brief and actual sketch of a volunteer fire brigade in the country, though scarcely parallel in all its incidents, will yet afford some idea of the arrangements and discipline upon which the metropolis was dependent for the extinction of its conflagrations before the formation of the London Fire Establishment in 1833.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade, of which Captain Shaw is, and has been since its formation, the chief officer, is nineteen years old, having been called into existence by the 28 & 29 Vict. c. 90, on January 1, 1866, two hundred years after the Great Fire. Of the measures taken for the suppression of that stupendous conflagration, the only appliance with which we are concerned as at all approaching modern gear was a squirt of three feet long, capable of discharging half a gallon of water; an instrument presumably of some service, since by Act of Parliament in 1668 one was ordered to be kept in every ward, and for the working of which the alderman of that ward was made directly responsible. If he did not set it in action himself he was at any rate bound to see it done, as nowadays the sheriff, who has always been held responsible for the execution of criminals, must either himself discharge the last office of the law or provide an efficient substitute. This squirt was the first step towards fire-engines in England, though for some few years they had been already known in Germany; for in 1657 Hautsch of Nuremberg invented a kind of sledge water-cistern, the pumps of which were worked by twenty or thirty men, a machine subsequently improved upon by the brothers Ver Heyden of Amsterdam, when in 1672 they introduced the flexible hose, the whole the prototype of the manual fire-engine still in use. Of these cumbrous German arrangements the insurance companies, dating in this country from 1681, were the first to avail themselves, beginning with the Hand in Hand in 1699, and in 1720 including the Sun, the Union, the Westminster, the London, and the Royal Exchange, all of which by that time had men of their own, and engines amounting altogether to thirty. In the meantime, by an act of 1707 each parish was directed to keep a fire-engine, and a system of fire rewards was created for the first three to arrive on the spot—30s. for the first, 20s. for the second, 10s. for the third, and a sum not exceeding 10s. for the first turncock. In 1774, by the 14 Geo. III. c. 78 there were required to be in every parish two engines, one large and one small, a leathern pipe and

fire ladders, the whole under the management of the beadle and charity boys, of whom, when at work, George Cruikshank has made a well-known drawing. How far the Act was enforced there is nothing to show, for there is no record of prosecution, indictment, or penalties. The attendance of the engines was not compulsory outside of their own parish, and indeed the whole appears to have been for many years practically a dead letter, with the exception of Hackney, where a brigade was maintained by a halfpenny rate at a cost of 500*l.* a year; for when in 1866 the present brigade was formed, there were only about half-a-dozen engines out of some nominal hundreds taken over by the Board of Works as likely to be of any use. These Acts of 1707 and 1774 applied only within the bills of mortality. For the outlying parishes, the Lighting and Watching Act was provided in 1833, applicable to the whole of England and Wales.

In this imperfect manner, by the voluntary services of the insurance companies and the unpractised efforts of the beadle and charity boys, the fires of ever-spreading London were in some degree held in check; not without disputes and rivalries, sometimes even culminating in combat; for the men employed by one company would not infrequently withdraw their engines on discovering that the house ablaze paid its premiums to another, and the parish hastening to deserve the first arrival-money would occasionally have to win its way to the scene amid a storm of blows from its neighbour. Still the system, with all its absurdities, held for more than a hundred years, until its inefficiency grew so glaring and the expense to each company so great that in 1808 Sir Martin Eden, chairman of the Globe Insurance Office, attempted a co-operation which unfortunately failed; it was successfully effected, however, by Mr. Bell Forde, director of the Sun, when in 1825 the Sun, the Union, and the Royal Exchange combined their engines and firemen to work according to fixed rules—a union gradually joined by the others, until by the year 1833 most of the companies of any account had given in their adhesion to the scheme. This force, known as the London Fire Establishment, was organised and commanded by Mr. James Braidwood, at the time firemaster at Edinburgh, who retained his command until he was unfortunately killed, in June 1861, at the great fire at Cotton's Wharf, Tooley Street, by which, in addition to the loss of several lives, property to the amount of one million three hundred thousand pounds was totally destroyed.

On January 1, 1833, the establishment, governed by a committee formed of directors appointed by all the companies which joined the partnership, consisted of seventy-six officers and men, and nineteen stations, and at its greatest strength never amounted to more than one hundred and thirty-five men with forty-five engines; their duties lay over one hundred and twenty square miles, and the guardianship of property entrusted to them was variously estimated at from nine hundred to fourteen hundred millions of pounds. Nor were their efforts necessarily confined to the one hundred and twenty square miles, for there are instances on record of men having been sent on one occasion to Dover and on another to Bristol. The expense of the establishment, at first 8,000*l.* a year, rose, in 1861, when Captain Shaw succeeded Mr. Braidwood, to 25,000*l.*, at which it remained until 1865, the last year of the collective working of the insurance companies. The money was derived from a rate levied on the contributing companies in proportion to their several annual insurances.

It would take too long to note the varied fortunes of the establishment, the petty jealousies and rivalries, the secession of some of the companies and the indifference of others, but there are one or two points connected with its development which cannot be altogether passed over. In 1852, steam power was first adopted in the brigade to work one of the two engines that lay in barges on the river for extinguishing fires in the large warehouses on the banks. In 1855, a powerful steam floating engine was constructed and the manual floating engines were abandoned. In 1860, a land steam engine was constructed, at first hired monthly, but eventually purchased. The steam fire-engine had been actually invented about thirty years before, or rather one had been made from the model of a Mr. Braithwaite in 1830; but, whether from apathy or ignorance, the public authorities did not adopt it. Whatever its faults of weight and complication may have been, it must have been at least a sound and trustworthy machine; for we are told that after its neglect in this country it was carried over to Germany, where it was worked down in a coal mine every day for nearly twenty years, and, for anything that is known, may be working there still.

In the year 1861, it began to be clear that, however great the efficiency of the brigade, yet in the face of the rapid growth of the metropolis and the consequent alarming increase of the number of fires (in 1833, 458; in 1861, 1,183), a large

extension of the scheme would be required, the expense of which would necessarily fall on the insurance companies to a much greater amount than they would be willing to bear; and in the early part of 1864, after some preliminary correspondence, a formal notice was sent to the Home Office, stating that the companies had decided to discontinue the London Fire-Engine Establishment. Thirty years before, after the great fire at the Houses of Parliament, the companies had written to the Duke of Wellington, at that time Premier, pointing out that the brigade was maintained in the special interest of the insurance offices, and that, if two fires should, at the same time, require the services of the men, preference would be given to the property insured, to the possible destruction of government or other public buildings. It was suggested that the parochial engines should be inspected by the Commissioner of Police, be repaired and rendered efficient, and that when doing duty at a fire they should be placed under one head. To all of which the Duke replied that, while not denying that the arrangements proposed by the fire insurance companies might in some cases have beneficial results, it appeared to him that Government interference would probably cause private and parochial exertions to be relaxed.

The great fire in Tooley Street not only proved a great pecuniary loss to the companies, but showed conclusively the utter inadequacy of the force to cope with fires of such magnitude—a force which, concentrated to bear on a radius of three miles from the Royal Exchange, where the most valuable insured property was situate, and within which area the companies had most to fear from loss by fire, was powerless to protect the huge warehouses being constantly built in all parts of London. An application was, in consequence, made to Government in 1862, and Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, was informed that the companies could no longer be responsible for the safety of the metropolis from fire; that they considered it no more a part of their duty to protect life and property from destruction by fire than to guard them against thieves and murderers; that London was the only great city in the world utterly dependent on voluntary means for the extinction of fires without either government aid or local rates to aid in that object; and they finally expressed their intention of discontinuing the maintenance of the Establishment at an early date. They also intimated their willingness to transfer gratuitously the existing stations, engines,

and appliances (subsequently valued at 18,198*l.*) to such authority as Government might appoint. In February of the same year a committee of the House sat, who recommended the formation of a brigade under the superintendence of the Commissioners of Police, the area of the new arrangements to be confined within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Board of Works; adding the suggestion that no legislative enactments should be made to prevent the maintenance of fire brigades at the cost of owners of large properties, such as the docks, nor the special protection that should be afforded by owners of goods peculiarly exposed to risk of fire.

Captain Shaw was naturally the authority applied to to carry out the recommendations of the committee, and, at the request of Sir George Grey, he prepared an estimate for the new brigade which, at the cost of 70,000*l.* a year, was to provide for six districts, with 574 men, 330 engines, and 157 stations. This was objected to as excessive, and accordingly another was prepared which arranged for 416 men, 140 engines, and 95 stations at a cost of 52,000*l.* a year. To this again Sir George Grey replied that the Government was not prepared to sanction any scheme above the cost of 50,000*l.*; that in that case they would be willing to contribute annually 10,000*l.* for the protection of government buildings; and they requested Captain Shaw to keep within that limit. The final estimate was prepared on those lines, and, at the cost of 50,000*l.* a year, arranged for 277 men, 129 engines, and 89 stations; the expense being defrayed (besides the 10,000*l.* contributed by Government) by a house-rate of a halfpenny in the pound, by a payment from the insurance companies of 35*l.* for every million of property insured annually in the metropolis, by the sums realised from the fines imposed on occupiers of houses where chimneys catch fire, and by the money paid for special services rendered outside the metropolitan area, in cases of dispute decided summarily by two justices of the peace. From all these varied sources the income of the brigade is now estimated at about 120,000*l.*

The 50,000*l.* estimate was accepted, and on January 1, 1866, the London Fire-Engine Establishment (which in its thirty-three years had spent 530,545*l.*, and extinguished 29,069 fires) ceased to exist, and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade took its place. There was at first some difficulty as to the public authority to whom the superintendence of the new brigade should be entrusted,

whether to the police with their area of 700 square miles, equivalent to a square measuring more than 26 miles on each side, and extending therefore far out into the open country; or to the Metropolitan Board of Works with an area of 120 square miles, representing a district bounded on the east and west by Woolwich and Chiswick, on the north by Hampstead and part of Highgate, and on the south by Eltham and Lee, a territory about equal to a square measuring 11 miles on each side. The difficulty was solved in favour of the Board of Works, who are by the Act of 28 & 29 Vict. c. 90 empowered to provide and maintain an efficient force of firemen and engines; to equip the force with all necessary appointments; to purchase land and buildings for fire-engine stations; to acquire, on equitable terms, all the brigade property of the insurance companies, and, where likely to be useful, of the parish authorities; to pay all necessary salaries and compensations; to lay down regulations for the working of the system; to purchase and work the fire-escapes of the admirable society to which they had hitherto belonged, or to provide a new supply; and to give something like police authority to their servants when engaged in extinguishing fires. These provisions are chiefly administered by a special committee of one-third of the members of the whole board, called the Fire Brigade Committee; but the board reserves to itself the final settlement of the larger questions, such as the amount of salaries, the purchase of fire-engines and the erection of additional stations, and from time to time refers other matters (*e.g.* the questions of superannuation and hydrants) to the Works and General Purposes Committee.

One of the earliest of the measures taken by the new brigade was, in accordance with their powers, to acquire, in July 1867, the charge of the fire-escapes which had been previously exercised by the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire, a charitable association whose annual expenses of about 8,000*l.* a year were entirely derived from collections. The brigade took over ninety of these escapes, which, in the twenty-three years they had been in use, had saved more than a thousand lives. There are now no less than 128 of these ladders distributed nightly throughout the metropolis, each fully equipped with all necessary appliances and attended by a thoroughly trained and skilled fireman, visited at regular and irregular hours by a responsible officer. No separate computation is now made as to their cost, for the duties with escape and engine are in no way apart; but it is estimated that

the total cost of providing escapes and men amounts yearly to 18,000*l*.

From the day of its formation to the present the history of the development of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade is the history of the untiring energy and self-devotion of one man—the chief officer—whose example has been so completely diffused throughout the force that each member seems to have acquired something of each of his chief's remarkable qualities, and to be a Captain Shaw *in petto*; and in saying that, one could not wish to speak more highly of the men themselves. A day and a night spent at headquarters will do more to make that plain than the reading of all the reports and all the evidence laid before all the committees that have ever sat on the subject; but before the visit can be paid and the present perfection of arrangements appreciated, some regard must be had to the steps which have led up to it.

London is divided for fire purposes into four districts, each garrisoned with 130 or 140 men—a force strong enough to deal with the individual district fires. They are the A, comprising Westminster, Kensington, Bayswater, and, writing roughly, the whole of the West End; the B, the centre, including the City; the C, the East End; and the D, the whole of the south side of the river, in which the headquarters in the Southwark Bridge road are situate. Over each of these districts there is a superintendent, connected with headquarters by telegraph and in most cases by telephone, and himself connected with all the stations over which he has superintendence, for the discipline and efficiency of which he is directly responsible to his chief. No station, with one exception, is telegraphically connected with another; every order passes from or through the superintendent, even if sent by the chief. The one exception is in favour of the two nearest stations of two districts. For instance, the station nearest in district A is connected with the nearest station in district B and the nearest in district D, but the connection is never made use of unless there occur a fire on some point between, in which case both stations communicate and turn out. The connection is, of course, also employed if there be a break-down of communication, such as frequently occurs, between the office of the superintendent of the district where the station is situate and headquarters. This system of communication by telegraph and telephone, now rapidly approaching completion, is, as far at any rate as the telephone is concerned, the growth of only the last

few years, for it was in the early part of 1880 that the Edison Company gratuitously established telephonic communication between the B, C, and D districts and headquarters. The omission of the A district (the West End) was caused by the necessity of laying underground wires, an expense the company could hardly be expected to bear. The telephone now in use is the Gower-Bell, for the postal authorities, from whom the brigade rent them, do not appear to favour the Edison, notwithstanding that those who have had experience of both describe the latter as the better.

In the early days of the new brigade, all messages were sent and all calls were made by runners, a class of men and boys depending for a livelihood almost exclusively on this precarious industry, numbers of whom might have been seen hanging about the most important of the stations. They did not, Captain Shaw tells us, do their work badly as far as they were concerned; that is to say, when they got a message to deliver from one station to another they managed to deliver it in about the shortest time possible under the circumstances, generally doing half a mile in a little over three minutes, a mile in about eight minutes, a mile and a half in about fifteen, and so on, with proportionately decreasing speed for longer distances. They appear to have been of about the class one notices in autumn padding after four-wheeled cabs piled with baths and boxes. Still, however fast these gentry might run, it is plain that a long time elapsed before any considerable force could be brought together when required, and that heavy losses occurred in consequence; nor was it till after long waiting, and what the chief officer describes as 'intervals of blank despair,' that telegraphic communication with alphabetical instruments was at length established between the headquarter station and those of the four superintendents. Then followed, as we have said, the extension from the superintendents to all the district stations, until the complete system at present in use was established throughout the whole brigade. In 1880 many of the stations were surrounded with lines of call-points, at which any one can ring and summon the engines without going all the way to the station; and this, although occasionally harassing the firemen with false alarms, has proved on the whole of extraordinary utility. Later in the same year there was a change from telegraphs to telephones, the most beneficial of all. There is something touching in the sound of these bells of the telephone

constantly ringing through the night, signs of the watchfulness of those who, while others sleep, unceasingly guard the great city. As you lie awake on your trestle bed, patiently waiting the outbreak of fire—your axe, helmet, and boots ready by your side—they recall, though not perhaps so melodiously, the chiming of the innumerable bells in Sevastopol, whose plaintive tones were borne to the keen senses of those lying watchful in the trenches round the beleaguered port. The bell rings, and the fireman on duty answers it. You wait while he listens, hoping the affair may be in the neighbourhood and you may have to turn out; but, unfortunately, it is only from a policeman away at Dulwich, who has espied a second floor alight; and the officer in charge, judging the local force strong enough, sends round a 'stop' to all the other stations, and the men at Dulwich are left to deal with their own fire. Again the bell rings, and again, and still there is nothing for us; and so the whole night we lie awake and watch until the winter's morning breaks and the dangers of the dark are over. For it is at night that two-thirds of the fires of London break out, and of those the most between the hours of seven and midnight.

In 1866 the insurance companies established the Salvage Corps, whose black helmets may be seen at every fire, and whose duty it is to guard the property of their employers and prevent, as far as possible, damage from water or exposure. In the same year was established a school of instruction for recruits. Every man who joins the brigade has to undergo a period of instruction, during which time he draws pay. He has to be clothed, taught, housed, and in every way looked after, and for a considerable time gives no return whatever for the expense, which is calculated at about 100*l.* per man. After a time he gives a little, and at about the end of a year becomes thoroughly useful. The recruit must in the first place be a seaman, under thirty years of age and unmarried; must measure not less than 37 inches round the chest, and is generally preferred at least 5 feet 5 inches in height. He must be a man of general intelligence, able to read and write, must pass a medical inspection and produce certificates of birth and testimonials as to character and service. The pay at first joining is 24*s.* a week, and it rises to 27*s.* 5*d.*, 30*s.* 10*d.*, 34*s.* 3*d.*, 41*s.*, and 47*s.* 9*d.* The uniform is supplied yearly, and there is now a liberal arrangement for gratuities and pensions, with which the men appear to be in general satisfied. The candidate must be a seaman (to that rule

there has been no exception for thirty years), and he is preferred when coming from the merchant service rather than from the navy. The reason for preferring the sailor to the landsman is plain; his familiarity with climbing, with the handling of ropes, with doing work at a height, all give him a primary training of the highest importance. The preference extended to the merchant service arises from the fact that nowadays two-thirds of the navy men are merely engineers and fighters, men accustomed to work on deck rather than aloft; and though no doubt there are among them still many good climbers, they are not in the same proportion as in the merchant service, where the greater part of the men's work lies in the rigging. On presenting himself at headquarters the candidate has to undergo a very severe physical test, in which if he fail, he is not further examined. A fire-escape is laid horizontally on the ground, and by an arrangement of ropes and pulleys has to be raised to a vertical position. It is calculated that for the first twelve pulls this test represents a strain of 300 lbs., after which there is a gradual diminution of the weight, as the worst of it is over and the escape begins to rise. The men are drilled daily, except Saturday and Sunday, and before passing into the brigade wait for a certificate from the chief drill-instructor. The drill is of an exceedingly diversified and ingenious character. They jump from windows into sheets; they pick each other up and carry each other down ladders; they are slung out of window by ropes, representing the chair knot in use in courts or alleys where the escape cannot penetrate; they rescue each other when in a state of insensibility; and some of them, attired in what is known as a 'female dress,' are sent head first down the netting of the escape, in which uncomfortable manner it appears ladies in peril are brought out of danger. The coachmen, in number sixty-six, do not belong to the brigade, in the sense that they have nothing to do with extinguishing fires; they have only to look after their horses, which, at the pace they travel—a mile in about four minutes—must take them all their time. They are placed under the charge of the head coachman, who, before engaging, tries their capabilities in crowded parts of the city and makes a report. He is responsible for the horses, of which there are 131 jobbed by the Board, for the sake of economy, and not bought. Even in the stables, where the horses stand ready for work, needing but the slipping of a knot to set them free, Captain Shaw's complete system of administration penetrates; for there

hangs against the wall his code of instructions to coachmen to be observed at busy crossings and in crowded thoroughfares, by which it will be seen there is a method in what must seem to lookers-on to be the madness of fire-engine driving.

From the moment of the 'call' to the throwing open of the great doors and the issuing rush of the engine, equipped and horsed, there will often elapse not more than thirty seconds. Even in the smaller stations, where the men sleep out of the building and have to be summoned by telegraph, a fine is imposed if the turn-out takes longer than three minutes. On the night at headquarters when our services were required for an outbreak in Creed Lane, Ludgate Hill, at one moment it seemed that we were peaceably talking to one of the officers at home, and that at the next we were tearing over Southwark Bridge, thundering along like Faust and Mephistopheles to our annihilation. The interval is a confused memory of stamping horses and hurrying men, of glittering helmets and waving axes, of chaos and yet of cosmos, until the river lights were passed and we were galloping under the shadow of the solemn dome of St. Paul's. In narrow Creed Lane, at each end of which a policeman keeps back the curious few, there are no signs of conflagration. Were it not that there are others there before us from Watling Street with a hose-cart and a manual, always on the scene before the steam-engine, no one could guess there was danger or could see the reason of our being summoned. It is only when from one of the houses halfway up the lane we trace the hose trailing out of the front door like a black snake, and with this indication—as though it were the thread of Theseus from the cave of the Minotaur—enter and climb the narrow stair; it is only when we slip in the water and choke in the smoke in a room at the top, from which a fireman obligingly relieves us all by knocking out the window; it is only when we see the charred walls and smouldering floor, that we appreciate the reason of our hurry and feel that we have stamped on an outbreak which but for us might have swollen to the proportions of 1666 or of Chicago in 1871. This danger of smoke is only second in importance with the brigade to that of fire. The small taste we had of it gave us some idea of what it must be like in any intensity, or in those not infrequent cases when oils or chemicals are burning. In one instance the volume was so dense that nearly twenty minutes elapsed and ten or twelve engines arrived, some of them from

stations three miles away, before the fireman with the first escape, or the officer with the first engine, could ascertain on which side of the street the fire was burning.

Trifling as the danger was in Creed Lane, and entirely confined to one room, the house, lofty and paneled and apparently of great age, is completely deserted by the inhabitants. On one floor the Salvage men are laughing and talking together; on another, in a room where a citizen might have given a marriage feast to his fellow-livermen, there are signs of a domestic economy in strange contrast to what were no doubt once the fortunes of the inmates of the past. On a couple of broken packing-cases lie the remains of a supper, half consumed; a rickety chair stands by the fireplace; against the paneling on a nail hang a woman's shawl and a battered crape bonnet; over the fireplace is fastened a dingy text; the whole shadowed and illumined by a cloudy paraffin lamp, fuming on a narrow shelf. 'The cause of numbers of our fires,' says the engineer, our guide and friend, pointing to it; 'the man comes home drunk and knocks it over, and they run away and leave it.' Other ornament or furniture there is absolutely none.

The water used on the occasion we have briefly chronicled was drawn from a hydrant close at hand, one of a large number that now dot the city and are constantly being added to. It is supplied free of charge, a condition laid down in their respective Acts of Parliament from which the water companies derive their powers. With a hydrant there is never any difficulty in obtaining an immediate supply; if they were universal there would be no necessity for Captain Shaw to have to report, as he does, forty-three cases in the past year in which the water arrangements were unsatisfactory—fifteen of them cases of short supply, twenty-one of late attendance of turncocks, and seven of no attendance at all. The whole question of the supply appears to hinge on the difference of the flow being constant or intermittent; if it is intermittent, the men depend entirely on the turncock; if constant, they can draw the plugs themselves. The principal mains laid in all roads and streets of any importance are nearly all under constant pressure—*i.e.* if a plug is started from them a good supply of water is forthcoming. The chief difficulty is found in the labyrinth of by-streets, into many of which the water companies only lay service pipes. At a certain time in the day these service pipes are charged to supply the houses, and the water is after-

wards shut off. To accomplish this, sluice valves have to be opened in one direction, stopcocks in another, and possibly some require to be closed at some other point, and all this to divert the full pressure upon given points when they are not under constant pressure. So much is this a work requiring special knowledge that it takes a number of years for a turncock to properly learn the working of a round, as it is called. None of these turncocks are placed in charge until they have served several years as deputy. An important order in the brigade is that all officers and firemen are to acquaint themselves with the water-supply arrangements in the neighbourhood of their respective stations.

However deficient the water-supply may sometimes be, there was no lack of it on the occasion when we were present. There are, at times, complaints of waste and of more damage done by water than the extent of the fire seems to warrant. The point of attack, the amount of water to be used—in a word, the diagnosis of the fire—is a question for the judgment of the senior officer on the ground, who on arriving takes immediate command. 'As a rule, the first on the scene is the fireman in charge of the escape, who searches the building and makes every possible effort for the safety of those requiring aid. When the first engine arrives, and the officer in charge has heard from the escapeman, or seen for himself, the state of affairs, if it is necessary to get to work, he gets his branch as near as possible and keeps always moving forward, unless, as sometimes happens, he is driven back, in which case he still uses all his efforts to get on, and always takes care to occupy the nearest available spot from which he can command the fire. The others who come after, if necessary, do the same from the places most convenient for preventing the fire from spreading, until the whole has been surrounded. In short, a fireman's whole business is to get his men inside at every available point; and his success or failure in stopping a fire depends almost entirely on his being able or unable to do this. When there is no smoke or obstacle to prevent them from getting in, they set each engine to work as it arrives, enter the building at every available opening, and push on vigorously towards the centre or seat of the fire. After the firemen have been working for some time from different directions, and always advancing, the welcome sound of "Drop your water short" is heard, and then the beginning of the end is known to have arrived. Soon this is repeated from

several quarters, and the men become aware that they are rapidly approaching the centre. After this they see each other, or perhaps each other's lamps, and then as a rule the fire is over, and all danger of its spreading at an end, though there may still be much work for the firemen to do in turning over stock and cooling it.' This account of the method of dealing with a fire is taken almost verbatim from Captain Shaw's book written for the Health Exhibition; and it is only fair to suppose that since the operations are conducted by men of ten, fifteen, and often twenty years' experience, they are probably better judges of what is necessary in the way of water-expenditure than the looker-on who fancies he sees extravagance or carelessness.

There are many curiosities of burning, of extraordinary rapidity of combustion, which would be worth detailing if we had the space. Bad building is the cause of most, for bad building means rapid destruction by fire. The party-wall in the majority of old houses built in a row, and in many new, does not reach to the roof as it should, and the space between creates a channel—almost a blowpipe—for the spread of the fire to the next, which is very difficult to deal with. It is a danger provided against by legislation (for it is known that a nine-inch brick wall will resist fire as long as it stands), but often through carelessness it is overlooked. In France, under the Code Napoléon, the building of a proper party-wall has always been very strictly enforced, and even in the terrible days of the Commune there was no instance of fire spreading from one house to the other. A building with a large frontage of windows—a large shop, for instance, with show-rooms on each floor—is one of the most dangerous with which the Brigade have to cope. The glass soon cracks and falls out, the air rushes in, and the whole soon becomes one vast blast-furnace. Perhaps the most dangerous of all are those lofty establishments of flats which very properly go by the name of the builder's or proprietor's *folly*. There is no one spot in them free from or unlikely to catch fire, for they are collections of private houses as it were, and every part of a private house is equally vulnerable, and from their great height there are neither ladders long enough nor water-jets powerful enough to reach the top stories.

Every morning, except Sunday, the account of the fires of the last twenty-four hours is delivered to the insurance companies. In the report that lies before us for Saturday, January 3, our own little affair duly figures. The time of the 'call' is

given as 10.16 P.M.; then follow the address, the name of the occupier and his business, the name and residence of the landlord, the supposed cause of fire—in this case unknown—the office in which the contents and building are insured, and the damage done—‘third floor and contents damaged by fire and water, ceiling and contents under by water.’ In a large number of cases—in twenty per cent. of them indeed—the origin of the fire is unknown. Every effort is made at the time to arrive at it, and a day or two later a fireman is again sent to hear if any cause has been discovered. Many are no doubt due to incendiarism, and it is matter of observation that when business is bad fires are numerous, one often following another in the same establishment. The firemen mark the distinction by applying the term *sufferer* to the owner of property legitimately damaged or destroyed by fire, and *customer* to those who have indulged in more than one outbreak. The insurance companies rarely act upon suspicion, however strong, for arson is a difficult charge to bring home, and the failure of it above all things dangerous. In a well-known case of twenty years back, though to the mind of the fireman, and for the matter of that of most of the public, there was no reasonable doubt, yet the jury, flying off on a different point, as juries will, acquitted the accused; while many of the parishes, to mark their disapproval of the perfectly legitimate action the prosecuting office took and was bound to take, removed their trust property out of its hands to the amount, it is calculated, of several millions.

The question of official investigations into the causes of fires arises periodically in England, but nothing is ever done with it. Almost everything is left to chance. No public official has the right even to investigate beyond a certain point, and no doubt many criminals escape. Some years ago—from 1845 to 1850—a step was taken in the right direction in the City of London and the borough of Southwark, where special fire inquests were held by the coroner on the causes of all fires which were thought to be doubtful in their origin. In those five years seventy-one fire inquests were held, with the result that nine fires were found to have been wilfully caused, thirty-four to have been accidental, and in twenty-eight cases no conclusion at all could be arrived at. In four out of the nine cases the persons implicated were prosecuted, but out of the four there was only one conviction. The inquiries were then discontinued, as it was found by the authorities that the amount of money expended far exceeded the importance of the results,

and there was understood to be some doubt as to the strict legality of the proceedings, or of the payments rendered necessary by them. Since then no further steps have been taken, or perhaps are likely to be, for allowing the very moderate cost of 50*l.* for each investigation, there would thereby be annually added to the expenses of the Brigade considerably over 100,000*l.*

It will be interesting to note briefly some of the more important facts connected with the fires of London during the last year, as given in Captain Shaw's report for 1884. There were 2,806 calls, 373 of them false, 144 for chimneys, 2,289 for actual fires, 194 of which were serious and 2,095 slight, the whole being an increase on 1883 of 145, and, on an average of the last ten years, of 531. There were 200 persons seriously endangered by fire, 42 of whom lost their lives. The calls for chimneys were 4,532, of which 1,641 proved to be false alarms; in 2,891 cases they were on fire, but were extinguished by hand-pumps without the attendance of the engines. The 55 land stations made 30,503 journeys, covering 69,602 miles; 187,000 tons of water were used, about 105,000 tons of which were drawn from the river, canals, and docks, the remainder from the street pipes; and, as we have said, in 43 cases the supply was unsatisfactory. The Brigade consists of 589 firemen, including chief officer, second officer, superintendents and all ranks, of whom the number employed on the several watches is at present 118 by day and 373 by night, making a total of 490 in every twenty-four hours, the remaining men being available for general work at fires if needed, for the men are like sailors on board ship, either at work or ready for it. They have no time at all off duty, except by permission. The commoner causes of fires appear to be—children playing with lucifers, spirit lamps upset, lights thrown down, sparks from fire, swinging gas brackets, seeking for gas escapes with lights, defects in flue; and even such odd entries as 'cat ignited lucifers,' 'bottle of whisky burst,' 'sun set fire to fusees,' and 'hunting bugs' find an occasional place.

Of the 589 firemen, 67 are officers, the whole of whom, with the exception of the superintendents, are divided into three boards of officers—viz. the accounts and examiners board, the general arrangements board, and the supplies board. The two principal engineers at head-quarters, the four superintendents, and the engineers in charge of floating stations, having especially important duties, are appointed honorary members of all boards, the work to

be done in connection with each of which can be divined from their several titles. Every officer works upwards from the lowest degree, and through every branch of the business connected with the Brigade. If it were Napoleon's boast that he could, if he were driven to it, with his own hands make everything connected with the art of war, from a tunic to gunpowder, from a mortar to a shako, it may be equally that of Captain Shaw and his men, that there are none of them who are not entirely versed in every detail of their calling, from splicing a hose and refitting an engine, to mending a helmet or shoeing a horse. It is one of the strictest rules of the chief officer that every man does his turn at all their varied work, remaining only long enough in each department to learn from it what is necessary for the general business. The result is that each man is tolerably complete and self-reliant, and can not only manage the hose and use effectively his axe and preventor, but can refit his own engine and mend his own helmet.

It will be observed that the estimated cost of the Brigade for 1885 is more than double the cost of the scheme accepted by the Government in 1865. That scheme was itself 20,000*l.* short of the lowest sum for which Captain Shaw was of opinion adequate protection could be afforded to the metropolis, and was exclusive of the cost of the escapes, which at that time formed a separate body. The total estimate, therefore, for the London of 1865 should be 90,000*l.*, or about 30,000*l.* less than the money spent on it last year. But this increase scarcely marches with the extraordinary growth and extension of wealth of the last twenty years which it is the duty of the Brigade to protect—of that even the Board of Works is conscious; and though in the actual state of the funds no addition of stations or men is possible, it is believed that, but for the Municipal Bill of last year, steps would have been taken to double the halfpenny rate and carry out Captain Shaw's scheme to completion. As matters stand, if two large fires were to occur simultaneously, if a mob were to set the city alight in half a dozen places at once, the strength of the Brigade would not suffice to deal with them all, and some would have to be left to burn themselves out.

We have left ourselves no space to mention the different provincial arrangements in this country for the protection of our great towns, nor the various continental systems; we can only say that in Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow the duties of the police and the firemen are amalgamated to a greater and a less extent, something after the manner proposed to be adopted here by the

Committee of 1877, but never acted on. In France and Germany the system is military; a certain proportion, we believe, of the men of the regiments stationed in Paris, for example, acting as firemen, under the superintendence of a colonel, who commands only so long as he happens to be stationed in the district. They have a vast number of men and small manual engines, arrangements well enough adapted for cities where property is not massed to the same extent as here.

It is from America that we are supposed to have most to learn, and, no doubt, if we had as much money to spend, could produce at any rate the same mechanical results. Certainly in discipline, energy, and endurance, we are, comparing the relative forces, considerably ahead.

We have purposely omitted all reference to theatres and public buildings, as opening up a field too wide to be dealt with in a paper of this description. As to the former, however, we may say that the terrible disasters of the Ring and the Brooklyn theatres have so roused the energies of the authorities in this country that the repetition of such a disaster here is, it is hoped, well-nigh impossible. Even the Criterion, probably in public estimation the most dangerous theatre in London, can be easily emptied in four minutes, and is, further, so well constructed that the corridors and passages are capable of holding the whole of the audience. The most perfect theatre in the world, from the fireman's point of view, is the Opera House in Paris; and though we can boast of no building to compare with it, the great majority of our houses are, as far as the people in front are concerned, very tolerably safe. Some few of the public buildings, such as the Post Office, with all its head departments, are specially protected by the Brigade, for which an account is sent in quarterly, a slight increase being made on the amount of wages actually paid to the men, to cover wear and tear of uniform. The British and South Kensington Museums have each a staff of firemen from the Brigade permanently employed, the men having previously resigned their appointments under the Board of Works. On the majority of the other public buildings, notably the Houses of Parliament, the police keep a fire-watch, and look after the hose and other appliances themselves.

In conclusion, we desire to draw attention to the volunteer fireman, in dealing with whom, especially when he is in the collecting vein, we warn the public to be especially cautious. He

falls upon a neighbourhood where protection from fire is scanty ; he calls to himself a couple of companions, he hires an engine and a shop to hold it, and he sets to work. The work he does is to dress himself as like a fireman as possible and collect what money he can. When he has got it, the crew divide and disappear, and the engine is distrained for rent. There are volunteer firemen who, we believe, do good work ; there was, for instance, a famous distiller of Lambeth who, for many years, spent 400*l.* on keeping up a brigade, and in eleven years attended 460 fires in his own parish alone ; against such these remarks are not directed, nor if they were could they do harm.

To sum up, we cannot do better than quote the closing words of Captain Shaw's report for the past year, with the addition of our own hearty concurrence and approval : 'I have made a special study of what is done by forces of every kind, in all countries, and I think I can justly say that no public body of men anywhere has ever, even in an exceptional year, been called on to go through as much constant severe labour as this Brigade has undergone in the last few years, and especially during the year 1884. I dare say we have made some mistakes, but I know that all ranks have worked hard and done their best, and I trust that the result has been satisfactory.'

MRS. WILMINGTON'S GARDEN PARTY.



HE July sun, unabashed by the frown on the rector of Linthorpe's face, at other times a cheerful, pleasant, handsome face enough, shone full upon that open paved space at the back of Linthorpe Church which goes by the name of the Church Kalends; and so shining flung its radiance upon three figures. It shone upon the frowning rector as he walked away, his lips closed and his fingers grasping the handle of his umbrella with unwonted tightness; upon

the portly person of Mrs. Adam Wilmington standing where he left her; and—oh singular beneficence!—as brightly upon a third figure receding into the distance, the figure of the new curate. The rector and Mrs. Adam (so she was often called in Linthorpe) had just been discussing him, and even now the lady stood looking after him, her head slightly thrown back that she might level her eyeglasses with greater ease. It was a favourite pose of Mrs. Adam Wilmington's, and one therefore, it is needless to state, rich in a certain conscious importance and dignity.

The colloquy just ended had gone on in this wise. 'He seems a very decent young man,' Mrs. Adam had said; and the rector had said 'Umph!' 'What is his name?' Mrs. Adam had asked; and the rector had said 'Jones.' Then the lady had said 'He is married, I think?' and the rector had answered 'Yes.' And so far the discussion, though somewhat one-sided, had been a sufficiently pleasant one. But then Mrs. Adam had said 'I trust she is a sensible person and well brought up?' and Mr. Hablot had replied 'They come from Cornwall.' Simply 'They come from

Cornwall,' and this with a shadow of a smile, as if there were some joke in it. If there were, it was a far-fetched one. Mrs. Adam at any rate saw none, and only considered that the rector might have been more explicit. 'I think I shall ask them to my party on the twenty-first,' she went on to say, and this time the gentleman said nothing, which Mrs. Adam thought more irrelevant than before. And so she bridled up with, 'Now, rector, it is a long way, you know, to go for a curate to Cornwall; I trust that you had good references, and from respectable people?' She said it in her grandest manner. Yet Mr. Hablot—who can gauge a man's humours?—only answered 'The best, the best!' and hastened off quite abruptly down the High Street with that frown upon his pleasant face which we have noted—such a frown as even the tradesmen's salaams failed to remove.

It was the old story of two kings in Brentford. Mrs. Adam Wilmington of the Tower House, Linthorpe, had once been the wife of a Mr. Adam Wilmington; and Mr. Adam Wilmington had once—a very long time ago—signed himself as of 17 Broad Street, Linthorpe, wholesale wine and spirit merchant. A very long time ago this latter once; so long that many people in the town had forgotten it, and many others, to whom Mrs. Adam's horses and brougham and silks and sealskins, her daughter, her niece, her maid, and herself, were everyday objects, had never been aware of it, but regarded all these things as notable factors in the scheme of providence locally and partially unfolded at Linthorpe. Nay, indeed, the once in question was so long ago, and Mrs. Adam was so happily constituted a woman, that I verily believe this to have been the view she took of it herself.

She was a woman of large mind, enjoying therein that even balance of mind and body which makes up the perfect creature. She was in truth of so managing a turn that the superintendence of her house and the lead in the society of the little town were not enough for her. Even the extension of a slight opening into the county circle, which she had effected *vi et opibus*, failed to amuse her after a time; it was so long in leading to anything. And so upon a sudden she discovered a vast interest in parish doings, and from aiding the rector passed easily to interfering with him; arriving in time at such a pitch of patronage and superintendence that the Old Street labourers dubbed the rector the 'deputy-ganger,' and poor Mr. Hablot himself, who, with an invalid wife, a large income, and three curates, should have been

the most enviable of men, walked down his own High Street of Linthorpe with a frown on his face.

To return to Mrs. Wilmington. After watching the curate as long as he remained in sight, she resolved to call upon his wife and confer the invitation at once; and acted upon the thought without loss of time. The housemaid who announced her was Linthorpe bred, and did it with an awful relish, appreciating to the full the rustling of silk and scattering of perfumes which attended my lady into Mrs. Jones's drawing-room. It was not a large room at its best: now it seemed to grow smaller, as used the Court of Exchequer and its paling judges on each ninth of November when the City sword-bearer in furry cap and scarlet coat walked in. The Indian china (which could not be real, could it? a hundred and fifty pounds a year!) seemed to lose its brilliance—the *bric-à-brac* (pretty, but cheap, *cela va sans dire*) to grow tawdry. Indeed the only thing not entirely overcome by the grandeur of the visitor was the little lady who was mistress of china, and *bric-à-brac*, and all. And she was so self-possessed that Mrs. Adam felt mysteriously compelled to a politeness as complete as it was possible for her to assume in such an establishment.

'You are very sensible to take so small a house,' she said, looking round her with much complacency, and considering what effect the double drawing-room at the Tower House would have upon her hostess. 'I always approve of young people commencing as they must go on, and according to their sphere. Of course you will let the garden?'

'I think not,' Mrs. Jones replied sweetly. 'I have a passion for flowers, and in a town a garden is almost a necessity, Mrs. Wilmington.'

'Oh!' with surprise; 'well, of course that is all right if you can afford it. But the garden here is far too large for your husband's inc—house. Why it is quite half the size of the gardens at the Tower House.'

'Indeed! I have heard that they are very fine.'

The elder lady was much mollified. 'You shall judge for yourself,' she said. 'I hope to see you and Mr. Jones at an archery party on Tuesday next. I am glad you have arrived in time, for I think it will be the affair of the season. You will make the acquaintance of my daughter, who was unable to call this afternoon, and will meet besides some very desirable people. The Ashleys of the Moor—he was member for the county in the

last parliament but one—and the Ferneys, Lord Sydenham's second cousins—very nice people indeed—and the Archdeacon and his wife.'

Mrs. Jones knew that when Mrs. Wilmington said 'nice people' she did not mean neat or tidy or particular people. No, Mrs. Wilmington, who lived in the country, meant people with shooting and fishing and a seat on the Bench, and a carriage and a cousinship, first, second, or third—the nearer the nicer—to Lord Sydenham. If she had lived in town, as we do, she would have meant people with a house in Cromwell Road, or Carlton House Terrace, party-giving, stylish, late dining—the later the nicer—people such as we love to bow to in the Park; people that are altogether too nice. Mrs. Jones, I say, understood her; yet she murmured something which sounded like an excuse.

'Now I cannot let you decline. You are a little shy, I dare say. It is an ordeal mixing with people of that class just at first, but you must fight against the feeling, and not give way to it. Clergymen's wives should go everywhere.'

'It is not that,' Mrs. Jones answered frankly and laughingly, 'but my brother is coming to-morrow to spend a few days with us.'

'If that is all,' said her visitor, with a sudden access of generosity, 'bring him with you! Bring him with you—of course,' she added hastily, 'if he goes into society at all.'

If the saving clause did not come too late, it passed disregarded. Mrs. Jones accepted for her brother so cheerfully that the great lady not only feared the favour was scarcely appreciated at its due weight, but augured ill of the brother's social fitness. 'Depend upon it, my dear, she is going to bring him out at our expense,' she said to her daughter later in the day; 'but what does it matter? There will be such a crowd that he need not be thrown against the Ferneys, or the Moor people.' To which Miss Wilmington agreed with her usual placidity.

A crowd there was to be. Mrs. Wilmington's house, forming part of the old castle which stands in the midst of Linthorpe, had aided her greatly in reaching her social position. It now presented such facilities for the gathering she planned as might well be beyond the reach of more wealthy people. Not only her own gardens, but the outer and inner greens, their privacy still secured by the solid battlements, were at her service; and many were the guesses at Linthorpe tea-tables as to the use to be made of them. Very wild reports were current. The round chapel, it was said,

would be arranged as a conservatory where coffee and ices could be served. The well might be used as a wine-cooler. The dungeon, not for the first time, would contain a witch; and the Council Chamber, where also in all likelihood an old woman was no new thing, might fitly be devoted to Aunt Sally. Lawn tennis and archery would take up the outer green, and upon the lawn looking on to the latter Mrs. Wilmington would take up her position with her more notable guests.

So wagged the Linthorpe tongues; and so much truth was known to underlie these conjectures as sufficed to excite the liveliest curiosity in the town. The struggle which ensued was grim and great. How to get, and how to refuse an invitation, became the first questions of the day on either side. For years mention of the late Wilmington, his business, and his licensed premises in Broad Street had not been so frequent. Hundreds with a smack of the lips heard for the first time of his existence. But the lady of the Tower House, secure in the possession of the Ashleys and the Ferneys—*nomina magna*, these—made light of hints and was proof against supplications. Nor, in truth, am I aware that any one actually refused her invitation on account of those little matters, though by very great good luck she omitted to ask some who certainly would have done so. I have no hesitation in stating this, because I have it from themselves, and therefore the fact admits of no doubt.

The weather on the twenty-first disappointed the hopes of such as were uninvited. The sky was cloudless. There was only so much breeze as would serve to cool fair cheeks flushed with exercise. The first to appear at the great party—of the notables that is—was Mrs. Drage, of Felton-Hoy. She tripped in gaily with one, two, three, four daughters, pretty-faced and pretty-figured, and—let me see—one gentleman, a tall bald man with eyes too large for a red face over which many crows had trodden. Ah, Mrs. Drage, you may greet our hostess with as much light-heartedness as you please, and wag your grey old curls jauntily, but you are finely embarrassed for all that. Call that bald man a regiment! Pooh!

‘My dear Mrs. Drage,’ quoth our hostess, fixing him pitilessly with her eye, ‘I suppose your other gentlemen are following?’

Eheu fugaces! The truth must be told. Mrs. Drage had faithfully promised to bring four youths to balance her girls, ‘quite a regiment, my dear,’ and eligible and fashionable and good-

tempered into the bargain. Moreover she had hinted with nods and winks unmistakable that two of the four—'she would say nothing about the others'—were mightily impressed with Carrie and Flo, 'dear girls.' But Mrs. Drage would not have been Mrs. Drage had she blenched. 'Ah, my dear Mrs. Wilmington,' she cried with emotion, 'if you only knew! But there, I cannot tell you now. I've no patience with the men, and the disgraceful way in which they've behaved——'

Carrie and Flo might bite their lips, and tap their little toes on the sod, but I verily believe the dear simple, transparent, garrulous old lady would then and there have narrated their wrongs in the public ear—nay, she was doing so—when the Ashleys of the Moor appeared in the nick of time at the great gates within which Mrs. Wilmington was receiving her guests. They knew Mrs. Drage. They were glad to find her here, and they carried her off into an aristocratic seclusion, whence however the gentle breeze now and again brought the words 'shameful,' 'disgraceful,' and the like to admiring ears. At which times it might be observed that the bald-headed man turned a shade pinker, and shuffled his big feet uneasily. Who knows? The position of the last rose of summer left blooming alone may have its discomforts. However, Miss Wilmington, a tall handsome girl, though I have heard Mrs. Drage say there was a little excess of repose in her attitudes and of graciousness in her smile (which could not be said of Carrie and Flo), took him in hand; but in a few moments at the sight of some fresh arrivals she left him to go to her mother.

'Who are these, mamma? I don't know them.'

'Only the new curate and his wife and her brother. I told you about them. Ah, how do you do, Mrs. Jones? I am really charmed to see you.'

If little Mrs. Jones had been self-possessed in her own drawing-room, she seemed equally at her ease here. She remarked upon the beauty of the weather, and the ruins, and Mrs. Wilmington's arrangements, with much calmness; then introduced her brother, whose name Mrs. Adam did not distinctly catch, but it sounded like Fulton. But bless my soul, if Mrs. Jones was self-possessed, Mr. Fulton was equally so; evidently it ran in the family. He was not a strikingly handsome man in appearance, being a tall fair young fellow with a bumpy forehead and a small moustache. He had, however, a quick assured way of talking, and he took the

lead at once with a coolness that quite bewildered Mrs. Wilmington, and surprised her daughter, to whom he bowed with great friendliness. But he stepped up to Miss Effie and shook hands with her. 'How charming!' he said brightly. 'I think I had the pleasure of travelling from London with you last week.' Whereat Miss Effie blushed, and turning shy eyes on older friends seemed to ask what they thought of him; and Mrs. Adam began to come to the conclusion that the young man was very presentable. Began, alas! for just when the new luminary was in the heyday of his dawning, and Miss Effie's cheeks were yet tinged with the roseate hues that heralded his appearance, he was totally eclipsed by the malign influence of Sirius—of the Dog Star in fact. In other words, just when our young friend's first appearance promised to be a most successful one, a little incident happened, a mere trifle in itself, yet sufficient vastly to amuse all Linthorpe who were not privileged to see it, and to cloud for ever the rising aspirant to Mrs. Wilmington's favour.

Yet it was not entirely his fault. On the contrary, the uninvited of Linthorpe set down the mishap to the fact that Mrs. Wilmington had omitted to put down a doornat at the gates. The doornat in her front hall was big with the warning '*Cave Canem*,' 'Ware dog,' but mat or warning at the entrance to the Green there was none. So Mr. Fulton stepping airily back had Miss Effie and not dogs on his mind, and came down with some little weight upon the toes of a fat black spaniel. The dog was in the act of entering; its feet were tender and unused to the treatment. It shrieked terribly, piteously to its gods, yelled savagely, hung on to its assailant's garments, and finally howled its way back limping and in woful plight to its mistress, whose cries were hardly less distressing. Then was there a pretty to-do! 'My poor darling!' wailed that lady, stooping over him—she was no other than the nobly related Mrs. Ferney, and the face of our hostess when she turned it in speechless indignation upon the culprit was dark indeed—'my sweet pet, has the clumsy man trodden upon it, and crushed its toes! Well, its mother will take it home to its own friends away from the nasty town!' And so on, and so on, while Mr. Ferney, an involuntary member of the group, stood over the childless Niobe and smiled such a yacuous smile as becomes a man's face when the wife of his bosom is fondling her dog.

But everyone else was full of commiseration; advice, regrets, and vinaigrettes were showered upon Mrs. Ferney. Even the un-

lucky offender made a forward move amid the hubbub, as if to apologise, but was hustled aside by the crowd of sympathisers, whose looks seemed to say, 'Monster, begone!' So, urged thereto by a gesture from the hostess, Miss Effie carried him off as little rudely as might be, and enticed him to a less frequented part of



the grounds. He was nothing loth to go in his heart; only youth, which grasps so eagerly at gilded pills, is as apt to make wry faces over floured sugar-plums. Maybe he thought it consorted with his dignity to assume an injured air.

Fie, Mr. Fulton! or shall we not think so badly of you? To be taken under Miss Effie's protection—and the more when a journey from London to Linthorpe in her company had induced an acquaintance with certain merits that were too prone to lie

violet-like half hidden—with the sweet curves of her thoughtful mouth, and the pretty turn of that dimple in her chin, with the humour that played at bo-peep in the depths of her blue eyes, and that quaint, wise way of holding her shapely head that went so well with her little old-fashioned stately bearing—I say, to be taken under Miss Effie's protection after an introduction to such daintinesses as these—not granted to all, mind you—was not a thing, no matter what film of others' disfavour might dull the event, over which any young man might look sulky or think of his dignity; but rather a clue to lead him to meditate very gravely and seriously of old age, and loneliness, and buttonless shirts, and suchlike things. Perhaps Miss Effie was aware of this; but if so she looked as good-humoured as ever, and when he said 'What a fuss about a dog's toe being trodden on!' and prodded the turf with a stick, and had no eyes for her any more than if she were forty instead of nineteen, *she* did not sulk, but answered merrily,

'A dog's toe? Mrs. Ferney's dog's toe, you mean.'

'And why Mrs. Ferney's in particular?'

'Do you ask why? Don't you know

"I am his lordship's dog at Kew;

Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?"

Mrs. Ferney is second cousin to the Earl of Sydenham?'

The gentleman made a comic and, indeed, impertinent grimace.

'Then it would not have been the same if my dog's toe had suffered?' he asked, looking her keenly in the face.

'Not at all,' cried Effie, returning his glance with the merriest of smiles; 'nor your own toe, I assure you. You are only the new curate's wife's brother, you know.'

Before she had risen from her mock courtesy she repented of her pertness. But she might have spared her blushes and her fears of hurting her companion's feelings. On the contrary, he laughed so long and so unconstrainedly that she hastened to put a bow into his hands, and challenge him to a dozen shots at the gold. Even then he gave way from time to time to little fits of merriment, sufficiently disconcerting, which made Effie doubt for a whole second together whether he were quite as charming as she had thought him on that journey. For quite a whole second together—at least once in the afternoon.

But, if Mr. Fulton was now out of sight of the select circle revolving about Mrs. Wilmington, he was not suffered to pass out

of mind. When Mr. Hablot arrived, more snowy as to his linen, more glossy as to his long-skirted coat, more aristocratic as to his rectorial person than any of his brethren present, Mrs. Drage lost not a moment in seizing upon him and telling him the tale. The truth was that Mrs. Ferney, fresh from the shock, and a great crowd accompanying her, had passed that lady with but the faintest recognition. So Mrs. Drage straightway abandoning the topic which had engrossed herself and amused her neighbours, 'the shameful conduct of those men,' avenged herself by recounting the dog's misadventure; and this with such a warmth of language and shrillness of laugh, as drove Mrs. Ferney to the verge of hysterics, and made her hostess turn hot and cold all in a minute.

'I like a young man of spirit,' cried Mrs. Drage, in that jolly loud voice of hers, 'and if I had been that young fellow—and a fine figure of a man he is, too, much what I remember you, rector—I should have kicked the dog out of the green. Now look at the little nuisance sitting howling in the middle of the band, for all the world as if he were a dancing dervish! To tell you the plain truth,' which Mrs. Drage sometimes told, though more commonly she adorned it, 'I don't hold with bringing dogs to parties of this kind, and if I had been Mrs. Wilmington—her arrangements are beautiful? Beautiful, beautiful to be sure—but as I was saying, if I had been Mrs. Wilmington—the weather very favourable, eh? yes, very—they would have found the door shut in the dog's face. And serve them right too. I've no patience with such people!'

Mrs. Adam, as she writhed upon her garden seat, had scarce patience with Mrs. Drage. Every word was plainly audible; the dog's mistress fanned herself violently, while the rector, the involuntary receiver of these open confidences, looked so hot and ill at ease that to have fanned him would have seemed a kind action. But as the dreadful old lady ran on, every other face wore an involuntary smile. It was really too bad, Mrs. Wilmington thought, when otherwise the thing was going off as well as possible. And yet she had no redress. She knew better than to attack Mrs. Drage, who came of nice people, and had two uncles and a cousin on the County Bench; and who, to do her justice—for perfect love casteth out fear—no more feared a lord, much less his second cousin, than she feared the town crier. Of whom, indeed, she had some cause to be shy; for did she not trespass upon his prerogatives a dozen times a month? So, Mrs. Drage being beyond attack, Mrs. Adam could only vow silently that the curate's wife

should pay for all, and endeavour by a flood of small talk to obliterate the unlucky impression.

For the time with success; but not for long. Mr. Hablot had attracted Mrs. Drage's attention back to the old topic on which she dilated, unrestrained now by the presence of Carrie and Flo, who, with Miss Wilmington and the bald-headed man, were playing a select game of lawn tennis at a distance; and Mrs. Ferney had been soothed into a nervous quietude. The servants were handing the tea and cates about, and the town ladies—such of them as were admitted to the circle immediately round the hostess—were inspecting the county ladies' dresses, and the county ladies were—but how dare we say what the county ladies were doing? Far be it from us!—still they were doing after their Olympian fashion, when, once more, the demon of discord rolled into the midst. Poor Mrs. Wilmington! *Sirius Malignus* was surely in the ascendant.

The band had ceased for a moment to play. The laughter and voices of the young people at the targets came faintly to mingle with the murmur of the party on the lawn, when there rang out, loud and distinct, through the castle a sudden scream—shrill, ear-piercing, and eloquent of agony. Every other sound ceased upon the instant—every tongue was stilled. Not one of the party but rose, and looked with more or less of alarm in the direction whence the cry came. Mrs. Adam turned pale and murmured that some accident must have happened. 'I hope it's not their faces,' quoth Mrs. Drage, her four girls in her mind. While Mr. Hablot, with his usual sense, said, 'Is Dr. Hodges here?' and Mrs. Ferney cried 'Where is my darling Sweep?' with more than her wonted sensibility. Alas! the dog answered for itself. There burst upon the view of the party a wildly bounding indiscriminately snapping little Sweep, a Sweep with all its hair on end, and every appearance of the most abject fright. First he careered to one side and the other, with the oddest contortions; then on a sudden he desisted from these purposeless gyrations, and made for the lawn. There was something of a panic. Not a few thought he had gone mad; and while some mounted upon their chairs, others, not so timid or less hasty, were impressed out of hand with the thorough soundness of Mrs. Drage's views upon dogs and afternoon parties. But Sweep had not gone mad. The cause of his distress was soon espied by, among others, Mrs. Ferney, who well-nigh fainted, and the hostess, who turned pale with anger and dismay. Even Mrs. Drage was heard to say (but cheerfully) 'Poor doggie.' An arrow

trailing and bounding behind him seemed to have its point buried in his shoulder. Miss Effie, her hands raised in horror, was in hot pursuit. So was Mr. Fulton, who, just as he came into view, made a great effort to capture the luckless beast. The only result was that the gentleman nearly measured his length on the turf, while the dog with a yelp of fright of extra vigour darted aside and never stopped until he lay panting and whining in his mistress's lap.

'This is intolerable!' cried Mrs. Adam; 'this is intolerable!'

She had not a doubt about the culprit. Or, if she had, the appearance of Mr. Fulton, as, out of breath, stammering, and confused, he joined the group round the dog, removed it. 'How did it happen?' she continued shrilly, when some one made the inquiry; 'you had better ask that gentleman!' in a voice so indignant, and with so scornful an accent upon the latter words, that it was no wonder that gentleman, as he muttered something about 'Entirely an accident—very clumsy—deeply deplored it,' was scarcely coherent; or that Miss Effie, hearing the rebuke and a witness of her friend's discomfiture, should lurk about the edges of the crowd with a flushed, frightened face and quivering lips, of which the curves were wholly piteous. She tried, indeed, to attract Mrs. Adam's attention; but what with Mr. Fulton's protestations (redoubled unfortunately at these junctures) and Mrs. Ferney's complaints, she twice failed to do so. Nay, when at last she partially succeeded, Mrs. Adam only said, in a voice sufficiently audible, 'For goodness sake, take him away!' and flung herself round.

Poor Effie! It was surely an unlucky day for her; but she did as she was bidden, and drew the culprit away from the immediate neighbourhood of the injured lady. Still she looked so distressed that—merely to judge from appearances—she might have been the person in fault. Mrs. Drage looked after her very sharply; but the old lady could hardly be entertaining an idea so perfectly ridiculous. For if that were so, why in the world should he take—what earthly motive could he have for taking—the blame? The stir was abating. The rector and Mr. Ferney examined Sweep, and found that the arrow had but just scratched the dog's skin. He was more frightened by the dangling shaft, the end of which had become entangled in his long coat, than injured by the blow.

Mr. Ferney good-humouredly assured Mrs. Wilmington that it was so. He would have argued too—for in such a case the burnt

child never learns to dread the fire—with his wife. But she only flamed out at him, and, finding plenty of sympathisers, cried wildly that her dog had been shot, and refused to be comforted. It was all that Mrs. Adam could do to prevent an open breach. Mrs. Ferney was for leaving the Tower House at once, and was only with great difficulty prevailed upon to retire with her injured pet to the quiet and coolness of the drawing-room. Her hostess gave a great sigh of relief when she saw them both safely established there out of harm's way; yet she could not leave her distinguished guest without one more word of apology.

'My dear Mrs. Ferney,' she pleaded softly, 'you feel, I am sure, how deeply I regret that this should have happened. How very, very, very sorry I am for your poor darling!'

Mrs. Ferney sighed and pressed the other's hand. 'Thank you,' she said; 'you are very good. But you will—I am sure you will—get rid of that horrid man. I should die if I saw him again. I'm quite sure I should faint. And it would kill my pet, would it not, dearest?'

Mrs. Wilmington was rather taken aback. How could she give a guest notice to quit at once? The afternoon was yet early. 'I think he will be quite certain to keep out of your way, dear Mrs. Ferney,' she began smoothly. 'I feel sure he will have so much right feeling as to do that.'

'Right feeling!' cried the county lady violently. 'After he has been guilty of this! Right feeling! When he has tried to murder a poor inoffensive harmless thing, and that simply out of revenge because it barked when he trod upon it! Pray don't talk to me about his right feeling.'

And she displayed signs of a relapse so serious, and so prompt a readiness to depart upon the instant, that Mrs. Wilmington was at her wit's end, and had no other resource than to assure her that it should be as she wished, 'exactly as she wished.' And then the hostess left the drawing-room, wondering, as she passed through the garden, by what hook or crook the affair was to be managed. It really was a most awkward affair.

She loitered a little on the way back; not unnaturally, seeing that she had such a matter in hand. Just before she regained the party, she had to pass a cool box-encircled nook, where was a favourite seat of hers. She thought that for two minutes more her absence would not be noticed. She hesitated. Surely all was going well. She would sit down for one hundred and

twenty seconds of coolness—no more. And down she sat, and gently fanned herself with a great sense of relief, while she cogitated upon this difficult business. The more Mrs. Adam thought of it, the less she liked it. How could it be managed without open scandal? She almost made up her mind to disregard Mrs. Ferney's whims, and trust that the young fellow would keep out of the lady's way. And then fortune, co-operating with this masterly inactivity on her part, favoured Mrs. Adam in a singular manner, and fully confirmed her by so doing in an idea she was apt to entertain—in common with some millions of persons—that a special providence was assigned to shape her ends—and the means to them. For she was aroused by the voices of two persons strolling along the walk at the back of her little arbour.

'It is so foolish of you, Jack,' said the one voice sharply. 'You are perfectly infatuated with the girl!'

'Well, and what of that?' answered the other—a man's voice. As he spoke some one kicked a stone savagely. 'What if I am? Have you got anything to say against her?'

'Only this, but I should think it would be quite enough. She is not a suitable match for you. Just think of her relations, Jack. How would you get on with them? Miss Wilmington and you belong to quite different ranks of society.'

The listener tossed her head as one who should say 'I hope so!' and drew herself up in her seeming solitude. It did not occur to her as possible that they might be talking of her niece Effie, the visitor from London, of whom as a poor curate's child she was not wont to make much or think much; and not of her daughter. I do not fancy that Mrs. Wilmington would have considered a marriage with the curate's wife's brother at all a *mésalliance* for Effie. I think not. But for Mr. Fulton to aspire to her daughter! Was ever such impertinence?

'She is a lady and I am a gentleman,' he answered hotly.

His sister shook her head. She had her reason. Mrs. Adam shook hers too, but it was not for quite the same reason. 'Don't be foolish, Jack,' said Mrs. Jones.

'Umph!' he exclaimed impatiently. 'Is this all you've got to say, Louie, now that you've brought me out here?'

'No,' she answered, disregarding his fractiousness. 'For what I know you may be merely amusing yourself. If so, you might think of me, and do it somewhere else, and not at Linthorpe, where Cresswell and I will have to suffer for you.'

'Amusing myself!' He was fairly indignant to judge from his tone.

'Yes, amusing yourself, young gentleman,' quoth Mrs. Adam, quite unable to control herself longer. She popped up as she spoke, and rising erect appeared, as if from the earth, some four feet from the astonished couple, who jumped back full as many. 'Amusing yourself! No; I should hope not that. Don't be disturbed, Mrs. Jones,' she went on with a certain affable grandeur and in an altered voice. 'I could not help overhearing, but I have heard nothing from you that does not do you honour. I am sure,' fixing a severe eye upon the gentleman, 'it is a very great pleasure to me to find a clergyman's wife in my parish holding views, so—so proper, and—and so very becoming and clerical.'

This assurance seemed as well-meant as it was sorely needed; for, of the couple she had surprised, Mrs. Jones looked by far the most confused and abashed. She coloured over cheeks and brow, and, so far from appearing as one who had said nothing but good of the listener, had all the air of a person to whom a moderate earthquake or a thunderstorm would be welcome. It was the gentleman who spoke first. 'You must be aware——' he began mildly.

'I am not aware of anything but this—that your sister has observed your attentions to my daughter, and therefore others may—nay, must—have done so too. I can hardly suppose that you are amusing yourself—here.' She indicated the Tower House demesne with a wave of the hand, but the wave was necessarily comprehensive, and included the target and Aunt Sally. If Mrs. Adam could not only take Time by the forelock, but also 'grasp the skirts of happy Chance,' the gentleman seemed altogether less fitted to 'grapple with his evil star.' He merely shifted his feet, while his face bore a look of mingled perplexity and hesitation; and allowed Mrs. Wilmington to resume without interruption, 'And as for any serious intentions, I think I had better say at once, as this *contretemps* has occurred, that they could not be seriously considered even for a moment; not for a moment. Such a match, as Mrs. Jones very properly said, would be most unsuitable.'

Mrs. Jones's expression of puzzled amazement gave way to a dawning intelligence. Something like a suppressed smile fluttered and struggled at the corners of her mouth. But she said nothing.

'This is a little sudden,' her brother began, still with some hesitation. 'I don't think you quite understand, Mrs. Wilmington, who——'

'I quite understand,' broke in Mrs. Wilmington, resolutely; 'and I beg that I may hear no more about it. Indeed, if I may be allowed to say so, Mrs. Jones, I should be obliged, if under the very—the very peculiar circumstances of the case, and after what has occurred, you know, your brother would relieve me from the embarrassment of his further presence here this afternoon. I am sure you have shown such excellent sense that you will not misunderstand me,' Mrs. Adam said in her most winning tone. 'Don't you think it would be a relief to us all?'

The gentleman had seemed about to speak again; he changed his mind in the course of Mrs. Wilmington's speech, and at its conclusion coloured and drew back haughtily. His sister looked surprised and angry. But Mrs. Wilmington was now in the best of tempers, and smiled with unfailing sweetness. She smiled upon the gentleman when he coldly lifted his hat, beamed upon Mrs. Jones when that lady (still a little uncertain of her identity) just touched her proffered hand, and, indeed, went on beaming until the couple had turned the corner and she felt sure they had gone. Then, if she had been a man and had been wearing such an article, I think she would have flung up her hat in sheer thankfulness that this awkward little business was so successfully and, considering its awkwardness, so quietly over. Not possessing a hat, or the power of whistling, Mrs. Adam contented herself with passing her handkerchief over her face, and sighing comfortably. She reflected with great cheerfulness that now she could face dear Mrs. Ferney with a clear conscience. So she allowed a very short interval to elapse, and then with an air of pleasant bustle hastened to rejoin her guests upon the lawn and render an account of the interesting sufferers.

But surely something had happened during her absence. The company upon the lawn had drawn together, and were standing in a compact group, their chairs for the most part deserted, and all their faces turned in one direction, and that away from their approaching hostess, and towards the great gates. They seemed to be thinking very little of the coming bulletin from the drawing-room, but to be expending all the energy unoccupied in staring towards the entrance in chattering amongst themselves. What was it? What had happened? Mrs. Wilmington asked herself. The dog, she knew, was safe. As she drew near to the group she looked eagerly beyond them, and, much to her amazement, saw that all this fuss was being made (so far as she could see) about a

little knot of people just parting at the gates. There were Mr. and Mrs. Jones and the latter's brother who were going out. And there was that officious, meddling, irrepressible Mrs. Drage, with two of her daughters, taking leave of them in the politest way imaginable. It was just like her plaguy ways, Mrs. Wilmington said to herself, but it did not account for all the world looking on as if at some public entertainment. Not at all! And the hostess wondered excessively and fumed not a little, until all too soon the facts came home to her.

It was Mrs. Ashley of the Moor who, being the first to become aware of her presence, was the first also to enlighten her. 'What a very handsome, nice young man he is!' she exclaimed eagerly, not waiting to hear a word of dear Mrs. Ferney and her sweet pet, of whom Mrs. Adam's tongue was on the quiver to speak.

'Who is?' asked the latter with consequent impatience.

'Lord Fulham, to be sure!'

'Lord Fulham?'

'Yes. But why, oh why,' cried the lady with great animation, 'my dear Mrs. Wilmington, did you not tell us who he was earlier, and that that dear charming little woman was old Lord Fulham's niece? I remember meeting the old lord, who was never married, at Biarritz. I declare I am quite angry with you. If Mr. Hablot had not kindly introduced me to her, I should never have known who she was, or what very nice people they were. What an acquisition she will be!'

'Mrs. Jones?' muttered the hostess interrogatively. She was almost beside herself. Surely it was a dream.

'Yes, Cresswell Jones is his name. He is,' and the lady lowered her voice, 'a little odd, you know. Has scruples about taking a living, and so forth. They say she worships the very ground he treads on. Delightful, isn't it? So romantic! Fancy her a curate's wife with all her money!'

Mrs. Adam Wilmington went pale and red by turns. It was too terribly shocking. Surely no such irremediable utter *faux pas* had ever been made by any one before. It was all clear to her now. The young, wealthy, unmarried Lord Fulham had been her guest, and she had turned him out—turned him out when he had as good as proposed for her daughter. Oh! it was too mortifying, and Mrs. Adam was really as near fainting as ever she was in her life, when Mrs. Drage's voice, like a dash of cold water, braced her up.

'I know a good fellow when I see him,' she was saying in a

cheery, excited tone. 'And what is more, rector, that young man can tell a pretty girl when he sees her, I'll warrant him. I saw him taking a look at Flo here, the clever dog! Well, never mind: the less said about these things the better, say I, and it's the still sow that sups the brose, eh? rector. But perhaps you will hear more about it one of these days.'

Mrs. Drage winked—yes, winked! but then she was nearly related to the County Bench—unutterable things. And Mr. Hablot, who did not go through life with his eyes shut, smiled good-naturedly in response. Yet it might have been observed that the next minute his glance wandered to where Miss Effie, with a downcast flushed face, and eyes bright with sweet excitement, was administering her third cup of tea to an old lady—who really was not carriage company, and had no business on the lawn at all. Mr. Hablot had seen Miss Effie often, but now he seemed to find some fresh interest in her pretty face and figure, that had been lacking before, for he scanned her very narrowly. Possibly, he may not have been thinking of her at all, but wondering whether Mrs. Wilmington would think he had tricked her, if only by his reticence.

Poor Mrs. Wilmington! She struggled through the rest of the afternoon as best she might; and it was not badly. She was, as has been said, a woman of large mind, and she made an heroic effort, and quarrelled with no one. Even from Mrs. Ferney and her sweet pet she parted with outward warmth and many expressions of the pleasure their company had given her. But when it was all over; when the two or three who stayed to dinner had gone; when Laura and Effie had retired to their rooms, and her ladyship to hers, then—well, of course, I don't know what she did then. But the largest minds are weak at times, and then I fancy Mrs. Adam rent her clothes, and put on sackcloth, and went heavily all the night. Then, I think she must have broken down. I think so. At any rate she seemed the next morning a little dazed and preoccupied—so much so, that when, in answer to her inquiry as to the train by which Effie was leaving, her niece named the eleven forty-five, she failed to observe the deep blush and sudden droop of the head with which the young lady accompanied her answer.

Miss Effie went by that train. And, by the oddest of all odd coincidences, there also travelled up to London by it, and in the same compartment, my Lord Fulham, of Pentrepol, in the county

of Cornwall, and Fulham Lodge, Middlesex. I have reason to believe that they had a pleasant journey, free from all that crushing and crowding to which people who do not travel in a compartment labelled (during at least the latter—the London half of the journey) 'Engaged' are so vexatiously liable. They have travelled up and down that line several times since; yet not so very frequently, for Mrs. Jones, who is not only her ladyship's sister-in-law, but her very close friend, has left Linthorpe, and their visits to the little town since that event have been rather in the nature



of state affairs. Nevertheless, Mrs. Adam Wilmington, now such a great person in the county that she leaves parish business alone and is on but indifferent terms with the rector, has few acquaintance to whom she has not expatiated on the tremendous exertions, the sacrifices, and the management by which she secured the match 'for that dear girl.'

And what of the gentleman, to whom, if I have heard aright, my lord says that he owes his wife? What of Sweep? Well, Sweep is still fat, well, and petted—cherished, as it is becoming a special providence should be.

BIG ANIMALS.

'THE *Atlantosaurus*,' said I, pointing affectionately with a wave of my left hand to all that was immortal of that extinct reptile, 'is estimated to have had a total length of one hundred feet, and was probably the very biggest lizard that ever lived, even in Western America, where his earthly remains were first disinhumed by an enthusiastic explorer.'

'Yes, yes,' my friend answered abstractedly. 'Of course, of course; things were all so very big in those days, you know, my dear fellow.'

'Excuse me,' I replied with polite incredulity; 'I really don't know to what particular period of time the phrase "in those days" may be supposed precisely to refer.'

My friend shuffled inside his coat a little uneasily. (I will admit that I was taking a mean advantage of him. The professorial lecture in private life, especially when followed by a strict examination, is quite undeniably a most intolerable nuisance.) 'Well,' he said, in a crusty voice, after a moment's hesitation, 'I mean, you know, in geological times . . . well, there, my dear fellow, things used all to be so *very* big in those days, usedn't they?'

I took compassion upon him and let him off easily. 'You've had enough of the museum,' I said with magnanimous self-denial. 'The *Atlantosaurus* has broken the camel's back. Let's go and have a quiet cigarette in the park outside.'

But if you suppose, reader, that I am going to carry my forbearance so far as to let you, too, off the remainder of that geological disquisition, you are certainly very much mistaken. A discourse which would be quite unpardonable in social intercourse may be freely admitted in the privacy of print; because, you see, while you can't easily tell a man that his conversation bores you (though some people just avoid doing so by an infinitesimal fraction), you can shut up a book whenever you like, without the very faintest or remotest risk of hurting the author's delicate susceptibilities.

The subject of my discourse naturally divides itself, like the conventional sermon, into two heads—the precise date of 'geological times,' and the exact bigness of the animals that lived in

them. And I may as well begin by announcing my general conclusion at the very outset; first, that 'those days' never existed at all; and secondly, that the animals which now inhabit this particular planet are, on the whole, about as big, taken in the lump, as any previous contemporary fauna that ever lived at any one time together upon its changeful surface. I know that to announce this sad conclusion is to break down one more universal and cherished belief: everybody considers that 'geological animals' were ever so much bigger than their modern representatives; but the interests of truth should always be paramount, and if the trade of an iconoclast is a somewhat cruel one, it is at least a necessary function in a world so ludicrously overstocked with popular delusions as this erring planet.

What, then, is the ordinary idea of 'geological time' in the minds of people like my good friend who refused to discuss with me the exact antiquity of the Atlantosaurian? They think of it all as immediate and contemporaneous, a vast panorama of innumerable ages being all crammed for them on to a single mental sheet, in which the dodo and the moa hob-an'-nob amicably with the pterodactyl and the ammonite; in which the tertiary megatherium goes cheek by jowl with the secondary deinosaurs and the primary trilobites; in which the huge herbivores of the Paris Basin are supposed to have browsed beneath the gigantic club-mosses of the Carboniferous period, and to have been successfully hunted by the great marine lizards and flying dragons of the Jurassic Epoch. Such a picture is really just as absurd, or, to speak more correctly, a thousand times absurder, than if one were to speak of those grand old times when Homer and Virgil smoked their pipes together in the Mermaid Tavern, while Shakespere and Molière, crowned with summer roses, sipped their Falernian at their ease beneath the whispering palmwoods of the Nevsky Prospect, and discussed the details of the play they were to produce to-morrow in the crowded Colosseum, on the occasion of Napoleon's reception at Memphis by his victorious brother emperors, Ramses and Sardanapalus. This is not, as the inexperienced reader may at first sight imagine, a literal transcript from one of the glowing descriptions that crowd the beautiful pages of Ouida; it is a faint attempt to parallel in the brief moment of historical time the glaring anachronisms perpetually committed as regards the vast lapse of geological chronology even by well-informed and intelligent people.

We must remember, then, that in dealing with geological time we are dealing with a positively awe-inspiring and unimaginable series of æons, each of which occupied its own enormous and incalculable epoch, and each of which saw the dawn, the rise, the culmination, and the downfall of innumerable types of plant and animal. On the cosmic clock, by whose pendulum alone we can faintly measure the dim ages behind us, the brief lapse of historical time, from the earliest of Egyptian dynasties to the events narrated in this evening's *Pall Mall*, is less than a second, less than a unit, less than the smallest item by which we can possibly guide our blind calculations. To a geologist the temples of Karnak and the New Law Courts would be absolutely contemporaneous; he has no means by which he could discriminate in date between a scarabæus of Thothmes, a denarius of Antonine, and a bronze farthing of her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. Competent authorities have shown good grounds for believing that the Glacial Epoch ended about 80,000 years ago; and everything that has happened since the Glacial Epoch is, from the geological point of view, described as 'recent.' A shell embedded in a clay cliff sixty or seventy thousand years ago, while short and swarthy Mongoloids still dwelt undisturbed in Britain, ages before the irruption of the 'Ancient Britons' of our inadequate school-books, is, in the eyes of geologists generally, still regarded as purely modern.

But behind that indivisible moment of recent time, that eighty thousand years which coincides in part with the fraction of a single swing of the cosmical pendulum, there lie hours, and days, and weeks, and months, and years, and centuries, and ages of an infinite, an illimitable, an inconceivable past, whose vast divisions unfold themselves slowly, one beyond the other, to our aching vision in the half-deciphered pages of the geological record. Before the Glacial Epoch there comes the Pliocene, immeasurably longer than the whole expanse of recent time; and before that again the still longer Miocene, and then the Eocene, immeasurably longer than all the others put together. These three make up in their sum the Tertiary period, which entire period can hardly have occupied more time in its passage than a single division of the Secondary, such as the Cretaceous, or the Oolite, or the Triassic; and the Secondary period, once more, though itself of positively appalling duration, seems but a patch (to use the expressive modernism) upon the unthinkable and

unrealisable vastness of the endless successive Primary æons. So that in the end we can only say, like Michael Scott's mystic head, 'Time was, Time is, Time will be.' The time we know affords us no measure at all for even the nearest and briefest epochs of the time we know not; and the time we know not seems to demand still vaster and more inexpressible figures as we pry back curiously, with wondering eyes, into its dimmest and earliest recesses.

These efforts to realise the unrealisable make one's head swim; let us hark back once more from cosmical time to the puny bigness of our earthly animals, living or extinct.

If we look at the whole of our existing fauna, marine and terrestrial, we shall soon see that we could bring together at the present moment a very goodly collection of extant monsters, most parlous monsters, too, each about as fairly big in its own kind as almost anything that has ever preceded it. Every age has its own *spécialité* in the way of bigness; in one epoch it is the lizards that take suddenly to developing overgrown creatures, the monarchs of creation in their little day; in another, it is the fishes that blossom out unexpectedly into Titanic proportions; in a third, it is the sloths or the proboscideans that wax fat and kick with gigantic members; in a fourth, it may be the birds or the men that are destined to evolve with future ages into veritable rocs or purely realistic Gargantuas or Brobdingnagians. The present period is most undoubtedly the period of the cetaceans; and the future geologist who goes hunting for dry bones among the ooze of the Atlantic, now known to us only by the scanty dredgings of our 'Alerts' and 'Challengers,' but then upheaved into snow-clad Alps or vine-covered Apennines, will doubtless stand aghast at the huge skeletons of our whales and our razor-backs, and will mutter to himself in awe-struck astonishment, in the exact words of my friend at South Kensington, 'Things used all to be so very big in those days, usedn't they?'

Now, the fact as to the comparative size of our own cetaceans and of 'geological' animals is just this. The *Atlantosaurus* of the Western American Jurassic beds, a great erect lizard, is the very largest creature ever known to have inhabited this sublunary sphere. His entire length is supposed to have reached about a hundred feet (for no complete skeleton has ever been discovered), while in stature he appears to have stood some thirty feet high, or over. In any case, he was undoubtedly a very big animal indeed, for his thigh-bone alone measures eight feet, or two feet taller

than that glory of contemporary civilisation, a British Grenadier. This, of course, implies a very decent total of height and size; but our own sperm whale frequently attains a good length of seventy feet, while the rorquals often run up to eighty, ninety, and even a hundred feet. We are thus fairly entitled to say that we have at least one species of animal now living which, occasionally at any rate, equals in size the very biggest and most colossal form known inferentially to geological science. Indeed, when we consider the extraordinary compactness and rotundity of the modern cetaceans, as compared with the tall limbs and straggling skeleton of the huge Jurassic dinosaurs, I am inclined to believe that the tonnage of a decent modern rorqual must positively exceed that of the gigantic *Atlantosaurus*, the great lizard of the west, *in propria persona*. I doubt, in short, whether even the solid thigh-bone of the dinosaur could ever have supported the prodigious weight of a full-grown family razor-back whale. The mental picture of these unwieldy monsters hopping casually about, like Alice's Gryphon in Tenniel's famous sketch, or like that still more parlous brute, the chortling Jabberwock, must be left to the vivid imagination of the courteous reader, who may fill in the details for himself as well as he is able.

If we turn from the particular comparison of selected specimens (always an unfair method of judging) to the general aspect of our contemporary fauna, I venture confidently to claim for our own existing human period as fine a collection of big animals as any other ever exhibited on this planet by any one single rival epoch. Of course, if you are going to lump all the extinct monsters and horrors into one imaginary unified fauna, regardless of anachronisms, I have nothing more to say to you; I will candidly admit that there were more great men in all previous generations put together, from Homer to Dickens, from Agamemnon to Wellington, than there are now existing in this last quarter of our really very respectable nineteenth century. But if you compare honestly age with age, one at a time, I fearlessly maintain that, so far from there being any falling off in the average bigness of things generally in these latter days, there are more big things now living than there ever were in any one single epoch, even of much longer duration than the 'recent' period.

I suppose we may fairly say, from the evidence before us, that there have been two Augustan Ages of big animals in the history of our earth—the Jurassic period, which was the zenith of the

reptilian type, and the Pliocene, which was the zenith of the colossal terrestrial tertiary mammals. I say on purpose, 'from the evidence before us,' because, as I shall go on to explain hereafter, I do not myself believe that any one age has much surpassed another in the general size of its fauna, since the Permian Epoch at least; and where we do not get geological evidence of the existence of big animals in any particular deposit, we may take it for granted, I think, that that deposit was laid down under conditions unfavourable to the preservation of the remains of large species. For example, the sediment now being accumulated at the bottom of the Caspian cannot possibly contain the bones of any creature much larger than the Caspian seal, because there are no big species there swimming; and yet that fact does not negative the existence in other places of whales, elephants, giraffes, buffaloes, and hippopotami. Nevertheless, we can only go upon the facts before us; and if we compare our existing fauna with the fauna of Jurassic and Pliocene times, we shall at any rate be putting it to the test of the severest competition that lies within our power under the actual circumstances.

In the Jurassic age there were undoubtedly a great many very big reptiles. 'A monstrous eft was of old the lord and master of earth. For him did his high sun flame and his river billowing ran, And he felt himself in his pride to be nature's crowning race.' There was the ichthyosaurus, a fishlike marine lizard, familiar to us all from a thousand reconstructions, with his long thin body, his strong flippers, his stumpy neck, and his huge pair of staring goggle eyes. The ichthyosaurus was certainly a most unpleasant creature to meet alone in a narrow strait on a dark night; but if it comes to actual measurement, the very biggest ichthyosaurian skeleton ever unearthed does not exceed twenty-five feet from snout to tail. Now, this is an extremely decent size for a reptile, as reptiles go; for the crocodile and alligator, the two biggest existing lizards, seldom attain an extreme length of sixteen feet. But there are other reptiles now living that easily beat the ichthyosaurus, such, for example, as the larger pythons or rock-snakes, which not infrequently reach to thirty feet, and measure round the waist as much as a London alderman of the noblest proportions. Of course, other Jurassic saurians easily beat this simple record. Our British *Megalosaurus* only extended twenty-five feet in length, and carried weight not exceeding three tons; but his rival *Ceteosaurus* stood ten feet high,

and measured fifty feet from the tip of his snout to the end of his tail; while the dimensions of *Titanosaurus* may be briefly described as sixty feet by thirty, and those of *Atlantosaurus* as one hundred by thirty-two. Viewed as reptiles, we have certainly nothing at all to come up to these; but our cetaceans, as a group, show an assemblage of species which could very favourably compete with the whole lot of Jurassic saurians at any cattle show. Indeed, if it came to tonnage, I believe a good blubbery right whale could easily give points to any deinosaurs that ever moved upon oolitic continents.

The great mammals of the Pliocene age, again, such as the *deinotherium* and the *mastodon*, were also, in their way, very big things in livestock; but they scarcely exceeded the modern elephant, and by no means came near the modern whales. A few colossal ruminants of the same period could have held their own well against our existing giraffes, elks, and buffaloes; but taking the group as a group, I don't think there is any reason to believe that it beat in general aspect the living fauna of this present age.

For few people ever really remember how very many big animals we still possess. We have the Indian and the African elephant, the hippopotamus, the various rhinoceroses, the walrus, the giraffe, the elk, the bison, the musk ox, the dromedary, and the camel. Big marine animals are generally in all ages bigger than their biggest terrestrial rivals, and most people lump all our big existing cetaceans under the common and ridiculous title of whales, which makes this vast and varied assortment of gigantic species seem all reducible to a common form. As a matter of fact, however, there are several dozen colossal marine animals now sporting and spouting in all oceans, as distinct from one another as the camel is from the ox, or the elephant from the hippopotamus. Our New Zealand *Berardius* easily beats the *ichthyosaurus*; our sperm whale is more than a match for any Jurassic European deinosaurs; our rorqual, one hundred feet long, just equals the dimensions of the gigantic American *Atlantosaurus* himself. Besides these exceptional monsters, our bottle-heads reach to forty feet, our California whales to forty-four, our hump-backs to fifty, and our razor-backs to sixty or seventy. True fish generally fall far short of these enormous dimensions, but some of the larger sharks attain almost equal size with the biggest cetaceans. The common blue shark, with his twenty-five feet of solid rapacity, would have proved a tough antagonist,

I venture to believe, for the best bred enaliosaurian that ever munched a lias ammonite. I would back our modern Carcharodon, who grows to forty feet, against any plesiosaurus that ever swam the Jurassic sea. As for Rhinodon, a gigantic shark of the Indian Ocean, he has been actually measured to a length of fifty feet, and is stated often to attain seventy. I will stake my reputation upon it that he would have cleared the secondary seas of their great saurians in less than a century. When we come to add to these enormous marine and terrestrial creatures such other examples as the great snakes, the gigantic cuttle-fish, the grampuses, and manatees, and sea-lions, and sunfish, I am quite prepared fearlessly to challenge any other age that ever existed to enter the lists against our own for colossal forms of animal life.

Again, it is a point worth noting that a great many of the very big animals which people have in their minds when they talk vaguely about everything having been so very much bigger 'in those days' have become extinct within a very late period, and are often, from the geological point of view, quite recent.

For example, there is our friend the mammoth. I suppose no animal is more frequently present to the mind of the non-geological speaker, when he talks indefinitely about the great extinct monsters, than the familiar figure of that huge-tusked, hairy northern elephant. Yet the mammoth, chronologically speaking, is but a thing of yesterday. He was hunted here in England by men whose descendants are probably still living—at least so Professor Boyd Dawkins solemnly assures us; while in Siberia his frozen body, flesh and all, is found so very fresh that the wolves devour it, without raising any unnecessary question as to its fitness for lupine food. The Glacial Epoch is the yesterday of geological time, and it was the Glacial Epoch that finally killed off the last mammoth. Then, again, there is his neighbour, the mastodon. That big tertiary proboscidean did not live quite long enough, it is true, to be hunted by the cavemen of the Pleistocene age, but he survived at any rate as long as the Pliocene—our day before yesterday—and he often fell very likely before the fire-split flint weapons of the Abbé Bourgeois' Miocene men. The period that separates him from our own day is as nothing compared with the vast and immeasurable interval that separates him from the huge marine saurians of the Jurassic world. To compare the relative lapses of time with human chronology, the mastodon stands to our own fauna as Beau

Brummel stands to the modern masher, while the saurians stand to it as the Egyptian and Assyrian warriors stand to Lord Wolseley and the followers of the Mahdi.

Once more, take the gigantic moa of New Zealand, that enormous bird who was to the ostrich as the giraffe is to the antelope; a monstrous emu, as far surpassing the ostriches of to-day as the ostriches surpass all the other fowls of the air. Yet the moa, though now extinct, is in the strictest sense quite modern, a contemporary very likely of Queen Elizabeth or Queen Anne, exterminated by the Maoris only a very little time before the first white settlements in the great southern archipelago. It is even doubtful whether the moa did not live down to the days of the earliest colonists, for remains of Maori encampments are still discovered, with the ashes of the fireplace even now unscattered, and the close-gnawed bones of the gigantic bird lying in the very spot where the natives left them after their destructive feasts. So, too, with the big sharks. Our modern carcharodon, who runs (as I have before noted) to forty feet in length, is a very respectable monster indeed, as times go; and his huge snapping teeth, which measure nearly two inches long by one and a half broad, would disdain to make two bites of the able-bodied British seaman. But the naturalists of the 'Challenger' expedition dredged up in numbers from the ooze of the Pacific similar teeth, five inches long by four wide, so that the sharks to which they originally belonged must, by parity of reasoning, have measured nearly a hundred feet in length. This, no doubt, beats our biggest existing shark, the rhinodon, by some thirty feet. Still, the ooze of the Pacific is a quite recent or almost modern deposit, which is even now being accumulated on the sea bottom, and there would be really nothing astonishing in the discovery that some representatives of these colossal carcharodons are to this day swimming about at their lordly leisure among the coral reefs of the South Sea Islands. That very cautious naturalist, Dr. Günther, of the British Museum, contents himself indeed by merely saying: 'As we have no record of living individuals of that bulk having been observed, the gigantic species to which these teeth belonged must probably have become extinct within a comparatively recent period.'

If these things are so, the question naturally suggests itself: Why should certain types of animals have attained their greatest size at certain different epochs, and been replaced at others by

equally big animals of wholly unlike sorts? The answer, I believe, is simply this: Because there is not room and food in the world at any one time for more than a certain relatively small number of gigantic species. Each great group of animals has had successively its rise, its zenith, its decadence, and its dotage; each at the period of its highest development has produced a considerable number of colossal forms; each has been supplanted in due time by higher groups of totally different structure, which have killed off their predecessors, not indeed by actual stress of battle, but by irresistible competition for food and prey. The great saurians were thus succeeded by the great mammals, just as the great mammals are themselves in turn being ousted, from the land at least, by the human species.

Let us look briefly at the succession of big animals in the world, so far as we can follow it from the mutilated and fragmentary record of the geological remains.

The very earliest existing fossils would lead us to believe, what is otherwise quite probable, that life on our planet began with very small forms—that it passed at first through a baby stage. The animals of the Cambrian period are almost all small mollusks, star-fishes, sponges, and other simple, primitive types of life. There were as yet no vertebrates of any sort, not even fishes, far less amphibians, reptiles, birds, or mammals. The veritable giants of the Cambrian world were the crustaceans, and especially the trilobites, which, nevertheless, hardly exceeded in size a good big modern lobster. The biggest trilobite is some two feet long; and though we cannot by any means say that this was really the largest form of animal life then existing, owing to the extremely broken nature of the geological record, we have at least no evidence that anything bigger as yet moved upon the face of the waters. The trilobites, which were a sort of triple-tailed crabs (to speak very popularly), began in the Cambrian Epoch, attained their culminating point in the Silurian, waned in the Devonian, and died out utterly in the Carboniferous seas.

It is in the second great epoch, the Silurian, that the cuttle-fish tribe, still fairly represented by the nautilus, the argonaut, the squid, and the octopus, first began to make their appearance upon this or any other stage. The cuttle-fishes are among the most developed of invertebrate animals; they are rapid swimmers; they have large and powerful eyes; and they can easily enfold their prey (*teste* Victor Hugo) in their long and slimy sucker-

clad arms. With these natural advantages to back them up, it is not surprising that the cuttle family rapidly made their mark in the world. They were by far the most advanced thinkers and actors of their own age, and they rose almost at once to be the dominant creatures of the primæval ocean in which they swam. There were as yet no saurians or whales to dispute the dominion with these rapacious cephalopods, and so the cuttle family had things for the time all their own way. Before the end of the Silurian epoch, according to that accurate census-taker, M. Barande, they had blossomed forth into no less than 1,622 distinct species. For a single family to develop so enormous a variety of separate forms, all presumably derived from a single common ancestor, argues, of course, an immense success in life; and it also argues a vast lapse of time during which the different species were gradually demarcated from one another.

Some of the ammonites, which belonged to this cuttle-fish group, soon attained a very considerable size; but a shell known as the orthoceras (I wish my subject didn't compel me to use such *very* long words, but I am not personally answerable, thank heaven, for the vagaries of modern scientific nomenclature) grew to a bigger size than that of any other fossil mollusk, sometimes measuring as much as six feet in total length. At what date the gigantic cuttles of the present day first began to make their appearance it would be hard to say, for their shell-less bodies are so soft that they could leave hardly anything behind in a fossil state; but the largest known cuttle, measured by Mr. Gabriel, of Newfoundland, was eighty feet in length, including the long arms.

These cuttles are the only invertebrates at all in the running so far as colossal size is concerned, and it will be observed that here the largest modern specimen immeasurably beats the largest fossil form of the same type. I do not say that there were not fossil forms quite as big as the gigantic calamaries of our own time—on the contrary, I believe there were; but if we go by the record alone we must confess that, in the matter of invertebrates at least, the balance of size is all in favour of our own period.

The vertebrates first make their appearance, in the shape of fishes, towards the close of the Silurian period, the second of the great geological epochs. The earliest fish appear to have been small, elongated, eel-like creatures, closely resembling the lam-

preys in structure; but they rapidly developed in size and variety, and soon became the ruling race in the waters of the ocean, where they maintained their supremacy till the rise of the great secondary saurians. Even then, in spite of the severe competition thus introduced, and still later, in spite of the struggle for life against the huge modern cetaceans (the true monarchs of the recent seas), the sharks continued to hold their own as producers of gigantic forms; and at the present day their largest types probably rank second only to the whales in the whole range of animated nature. There seems no reason to doubt that modern fish, as a whole, quite equal in size the piscine fauna of any previous geological age.

It is somewhat different with the next great vertebrate group, the amphibians, represented in our own world only by the frogs, the toads, the newts, and the axolotls. Here we must certainly with shame confess that the amphibians of old greatly surpassed their degenerate descendants in our modern waters. The Japanese salamander, by far the biggest among our existing newts, never exceeds a yard in length from snout to tail; whereas some of the labyrinthodonts (forgive me once more) of the Carboniferous epoch must have reached at least seven or eight feet from stem to stern. But the reason of this falling off is not far to seek. When the adventurous newts and frogs of that remote period first dropped their gills and hopped about inquiringly on the dry land, under the shadow of the ancient tree-ferns and club-mosses, they were the only terrestrial vertebrates then existing, and they had the field (or, rather, the forest) all to themselves. For a while, therefore, like all dominant races for the time being, they blossomed forth at their ease into relatively gigantic forms. Frogs as big as donkeys, and efts as long as crocodiles, luxuriated to their hearts' content in the marshy lowlands, and lorded it freely over the small creatures which they found in undisturbed possession of the Carboniferous isles. But as ages passed away, and new improvements were slowly invented and patented by survival of the fittest in the offices of nature, their own more advanced and developed descendants, the reptiles and mammals, got the upper hand with them, and soon lived them down in the struggle for life, so that this essentially intermediate form is now almost entirely restricted to its one adapted seat, the pools and ditches that dry up in summer.

The reptiles, again, are a class in which the biggest modern

forms are simply nowhere beside the gigantic extinct species. First appearing on the earth at the very close of the vast primary periods—in the Permian age—they attained in secondary times the most colossal proportions, and have certainly never since been exceeded in size by any later forms of life in whatever direction. But one must remember that during the heyday of the great saurians, there were as yet no birds and no mammals. The place now filled in the ocean by the whales and grampuses, as well as the place now filled in the great continents by the elephants, the rhinoceroses, the hippopotami, and the other big quadrupeds, was then filled exclusively by huge reptiles, of the sort rendered familiar to us all by the restored effigies on the little island in the Crystal Palace grounds. Every dog has his day, and the reptiles had *their* day in the secondary period. The forms into which they developed were certainly every whit as large as any ever seen on the surface of this planet, but not, as I have already shown, appreciably larger than those of the biggest cetaceans known to science in our own time.

During the very period, however, when enaliosaurians and pterodactyls were playing such pranks before high heaven as might have made contemporary angels weep, if they took any notice of saurian morality, a small race of unobserved little prowlers was growing up in the dense shades of the neighbouring forests which was destined at last to oust the huge reptiles from their empire over earth, and to become in the fulness of time the exclusively dominant type of the whole planet. In the trias we get the first remains of mammalian life in the shape of tiny rat-like animals, marsupial in type, and closely related to the banded ant-eaters of New South Wales at the present day. Throughout the long lapse of the secondary ages, across the lias, the oolite, the wealden, and the chalk, we find the mammalian race slowly developing into opossums and kangaroos, such as still inhabit the isolated and antiquated continent of Australia. Gathering strength all the time for the coming contest, increasing constantly in size of brain and keenness of intelligence, the true mammals were able at last, towards the close of the secondary ages, to enter the lists boldly against the gigantic saurians. With the dawn of the tertiary period, the reign of the reptiles begins to wane, and the reign of the mammals to set in at last in real earnest. In place of the ichthyosaurs we get the huge cetaceans; in place of the deinosaurs we get the mammoth and the mastodon; in place of

the dominant reptile groups we get the first precursors of man himself.

The history of the great birds has been somewhat more singular. Unlike the other main vertebrate classes, the birds (as if on purpose to contradict the proverb) seem never yet to have had their day. Unfortunately for them, or at least for their chance of producing colossal species, their evolution went on side by side, apparently, with that of the still more intelligent and more powerful mammals; so that wherever the mammalian type had once firmly established itself, the birds were compelled to limit their aspirations to a very modest and humble standard. Terrestrial mammals, however, cannot cross the sea; so in isolated regions such as New Zealand and Madagascar, the birds had things all their own way. In New Zealand, there are no indigenous quadrupeds at all; and there the huge moa attained to dimensions almost equalling those of the giraffe. In Madagascar, the mammalian life was small and of low grade, so the gigantic *epyornis* became the very biggest of all known birds. At the same time, these big species acquired their immense size at the cost of the distinctive birdlike habit of flight. A flying moa is almost an impossible conception; even the ostriches compete practically with the zebras and antelopes rather than with the eagles, the condors, or the albatrosses. In like manner, when a pigeon found its way to Mauritius, it developed into the practically wingless dodo; while in the northern penguins, on their icy perches, the fore limbs have been gradually modified into swimming organs exactly analogous to the flippers of the seal.

Are the great animals now passing away and leaving no representatives of their greatness to future ages? On land at least that is very probable. Man, diminutive man, who, if he walked on all fours, would be no bigger than a silly sheep, and who only partially disguises his native smallness by his acquired habit of walking erect on what ought to be his hind legs—man has upset the whole balanced economy of nature, and is everywhere expelling and exterminating before him the great herbivores, his predecessors. He needs for his corn and his bananas the fruitful plains which were once laid down in prairie or scrubwood. Hence it seems not unlikely that the elephant, the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo must go. But we are still a long way off from that final consummation, even on dry land; while as for the water, it appears highly probable that there are as good fish still in the sea as ever came out of it. Whether man himself, now become the

sole dominant animal of our poor old planet, will ever develop into Titanic proportions, seems far more problematical. The race is now no longer to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Brain counts for more than muscle, and mind has gained the final victory over mere matter. Goliath of Gath has shrunk into insignificance before the Gatling gun; as in the fairy tales of old, it is cunning little Jack with his clever devices who wins the day against the heavy, clumsy, muddle-headed giants. Nowadays it is our 'Minotaurs' and 'Warriors' that are the real leviathans and behemoths of the great deep; our Krupps and Armstrongs are the fire-breathing krakens of the latter-day seas. Instead of developing individually into huge proportions, the human race tends rather to aggregate into vast empires, which compete with one another by means of huge armaments, and invent mitrailleuses and torpedos of incredible ferocity for their mutual destruction. The dragons of the prime that tare each other in their slime have yielded place to eighty-ton guns and armour-plated turret-ships. Those are the genuine lineal representatives on our modern seas of the secondary saurians. Let us hope that some coming geologist of the dim future, finding the fossil remains of the sunken 'Captain,' or the plated scales of the 'Comte de Grasse,' firmly embedded in the upheaved ooze of the existing Atlantic, may shake his head in solemn deprecation at the horrid sight, and thank heaven that such hideous carnivorous creatures no longer exist in his own day.

THE RABBI'S PRESENT.

A Rabbi once, by all admired,
 Received, of high esteem the sign,
 From those his goodness thus inspired,
 A present of a cask of wine.
 But lo! when soon he came to draw,
 A miracle, in mode as rapid
 But quite unlike what Cana saw,
 Had turned his wine to water vapid.
 The Rabbi never knew the cause,
 For miracles are things of mystery,
 Tho' some, like this, have had their laws
 Explained from facts of private history.
 His friends, whom love did aptly teach,
 Wished all to share the gracious task,
 So planned to bring a bottle each,
 And pour their wine in one great cask.
 Now one by chance thought, 'None will know,
 And with the wine of all my brothers
 One pint of water well may go ;'
And so by chance thought all the others !



RAINBOW GOLD.

A NOVEL.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

BOOK II.—*continued.*

HOW JOB ROUND BEGAN HIS REPENTANCE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE lapse of a quarter of a century had made little or no change in the outward aspects of the Armstrong *ménage*. The legend of the 'Stanhope Press' had been once repainted above the white-curtained domestic windows, and was now just as sun-faded and blistered as it had used to be, and the name of William Armstrong above the business window was no more shadowy than of old. Castle Barfield High Street generally had developed a taste for plate-glass windows, but the old-fashioned one-and-twenty panes, with the stained-glass announcement of patent medicines in the centre, still fenced the meagre show of stationery, books, and weekly journals. Within doors there were visible signs of decrepitude in the furniture, most of which was rheumatic with old age. The grey little man himself was greyer still and smaller still than he had been, being by this time bowed and shrivelled by many years of troubles, large and small, but his face was full of tranquil patience, and bright with a mild unquenchable humour. He sat in a high-backed spidery oaken armchair beside the drowsy and ash-grown fire, and Mrs. Armstrong, plump and large, sat opposite with a heap of stockings in her lap. Sarah Round sat near with a hand on the elder woman's chair, and the three kept silence, whilst a solemn eight-day clock in a recess said anything a listener's languid fancy might give him to say, and, having once begun, clung to his theme with a terrible tenacity.

'It'd be a lonely house now, Sarah,' said Mrs. Armstrong, gathering the heap of stockings together and laying them on a table at her side, 'if it wasn't for you and your father at times.'

‘I suppose so, grandmother,’ said Sarah; ‘they’re all away now.’

‘Yes, they’re all away. They’re all doing well, and they’re good children, though they was a trouble to us when they was here, but it’s lonely now they’re gone. Wake up, William, for goodness gracious sake, and talk a bit. There’s nothing breaks silence here except the clock, I do declare.’ The old man’s fingers were beating tattoo on the arm of the chair, and he was humming to no particular tune, and looking far away with an abstracted smile. ‘That’s chess for you!’ said his wife, with an air half vexed and half humorous. ‘If ever a young man has the impudence to ask you to marry him, Sarah, you ask him if he plays that game, and if he does, don’t have him, not if every hair of his head was hung with gold. When the children was at home he’d sit there just i’ the same way, and they’d come in and kiss him one by one and say good night, and when they’d all gone he’d wake up and look at the clock, and “Dear me,” he’d say, “them lads is gettin’ into late ways: it’s time they was all abed.” And yet he’d ha’ kissed every one of ’em, and said good-night to every one of ’em, and he’d have no more idea as they’d been near him than that poker.’

‘But you’ve been very happy with him altogether?’ said the girl, a little solicitously perhaps.

‘Happy!’ cried the old woman. ‘We’ve had our troubles, to be sure, and a many of ’em, my dear, if you knowed all, but I’ve been blessed with as good a husband as any woman i’ the world. Many and many a time I’ve been that aggravated at him I could have took his hair with both hands and knocked his head again the mantel board. He might have drove in his carriage if he’d been like some men i’ business, and he’s made my life a werrit ever since we met. I’ve laid awake i’ the night, with David’s knees through his trousers, and Willie’s toes through his boots, and the traveller for the printin’ ink comin’ in the mornin’, and the rent due next week, and I’ve heerd him say, “King to Queen’s Pawn’s thirty-fourth,” or some such rubbidge, and I’ve had hard work to keep my hands off him.’ She paused there to laugh, with such heartiness that all her buxom figure shook with mirth, and added, with a seriousness as sudden and unexpected as her laughter, ‘He never did a wrong thing in all his days. There isn’t his match for anything in Castle Barfield. He’s the best man I ever saw, Sarah, and I hope you may get a quarter as

good a husband when your time comes. You'll never hurt if that happens. But I get that angry at him sometimes as I wish I'd never seen him. William, do wake up, for goodness' sake !'

At this instant the shop-bell rang, and Armstrong, rising mechanically, went out to answer the summons.

'That's somebody for a penny postage-stamp, I know,' said Mrs. Armstrong, 'or else a lost child as wants to know where the parish crier lives, so as he can get himself inquired for. There never was such a trade as ourn, I do believe.' She laughed again at her own querulousness, and as she wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron said, 'It's kept we now for forty 'ears, bad as it is, and we've a many reasons to be thankful. Why, bless my heart, Sarah, it's your grandfather Round. Come in, Mr. Round, and sit down.'

The five-and-twenty years had not passed by without leaving a mark or two upon Ezekiel in their course. He still clung to the sartorial devices of his later middle age, and his red plush waist-coat and corduroy smalls, his brass-buttoned blue coat, high collars, and beaver hat were reckoned antediluvian amongst the sprightlier and younger sort of folk in Castle Barfield. So fast does time fly in lively places, and a thing of such limited grasp is the human memory. Except for a fringe of angry red hair, he was bald; the bull-dog pugnacity of his expression was aggravated by years, and his hands, which were two or three sizes too large for him, had a quite indescribable air of being perpetually held in readiness for a fight. They might have had a separate life of their own, and have spent their time in one eternal dream of fisticuffs.

'How be *you*, mum?' said Ezekiel, jerking his head towards Mrs. Armstrong as if he wished to throw it at her. 'And how be you, Sarah? Where's your dooty? Ain't you got a kiss for your grandfather?'

'Of course I have, grandfather,' responded Sarah, rising and kissing him. Ezekiel took the salute as a gatepost would have done, and, sitting in the chair Mrs. Armstrong had placed for him, laid his hat carefully upon the floor, fished out from it with the crook of his walking-stick a red cotton handkerchief, polished his bald head with it, and dropped it back into the hat.

'Nice weather for the time o' 'ear, this is,' he said then, turning an aggressive countenance on Armstrong, as if he held him answerable for the ground of his complaint. 'Here's a heast wind a-blowin' as if it was Michaelmas. Annybody sin my son Job?

Here, Sarer, you're his da'ter, an' yo' ought to know how he is if annybody does. How's he a-gettin' on, like?'

'Oh, father's very well indeed, grandfather,' returned the girl. 'Why don't you come and see us?'

'I mak no doubt he's well enough,' returned Ezekiel, ignoring her question, 'an' I do suppose he's as cussid as iver he was. There's more obstinaycy an' Oh-be-damnedness about our Job, Armstrong, than theer is about iver another mon i' Castle Barfield. It's welly a lifetime sence he left my doors, and he's niver set a foot acrost 'em sence.'

'Why don't you come and see us, grandfather?' Sarah asked again.

'Ah,' replied Ezekiel, 'why don't I? It's likely I'm agooin' to set foot i' my son's house when he won't set foot i' mine! Oh, ah! That's a likely stoory, to be sure, that is.'

'I'm sure, grandfather, that father would be glad to see you, and would make you welcome.'

'I mak no doubt upon it,' said Ezekiel with a jeer. 'He'd like to see me knuckle under and be the first to mak approach. It's a sperit as I can't abide, Armstrong. It's a thing as I cannot away with, and as I will not bow down to. "Honour thy father," is what the Scriptor says, and I had to do it when I were a lad, an' if I hadn't ha' done it I should ha' had such a hidin' I shouldn't ha' stood upright for a day or two. Wherefor I honoured my father i' my day, an' I expect Job to do it in his'n.'

'Ah, William,' said Mrs. Armstrong, 'there's a pair of 'em. Like two dogs at a clean-scraped bone. Nayther'll let it go for fear the other might get first bite, and there's nothing on it after all.'

Armstrong said nothing, but, rising from his chair, reached up to the high mantel-shelf for his pipe, and, having found it, pushed a scrap of paper through the bars of the grate, and stirred it about there in the hope of getting a light.

'A mon might come an' talk his head off i' this house,' said Ezekiel, 'an' niver get a answer.'

'He that meddleth in a quarrel that concerneth him not,' returned the placid old Scotchman, 'is like one that setteth a dog by the ears. Ye had my opinion on this topic twenty years ago, Mr. Round, and ye've had it repeated once a month or thereabouts ever since.'

'Ah!' said Ezekiel, 'this is the shop to come tew for sympathy, this is!'

'You're like a child boohooing that he's hungry,' returned Armstrong, 'with his porridge smoking under his nose. If you're hungry, feed away, man. D'y' expect the porridge to lose patience, and take to feeding you against your will?'

'I wish you'd mean summat when you tak to talkin',' said the impenetrable old dog, and straightway Mrs. Armstrong broke into a fit of laughter. Sarah hung her head that her grandfather might not see that she was smiling, and Armstrong, having at last got his scrap of paper to ignite, set the flame to his pipe and leaned back in his chair, smoking with undisturbed serenity.

'You've got a lot to loff at,' growled Ezekiel, surveying the poor apartment scornfully.

'Bless the men!' cried Mrs. Armstrong, with a gasp of recovery. 'They'm funnier than a Punch and Judy! They'm that outside one another and apart from one another, Sarah, it's as good as a play to listen to 'em.'

'There's them i' Castle Barfield,' said Ezekiel with deliberate scorn, 'as sets up Armstrong to be a man o' sense an' wisdom. He niver waasted none on 'em o' me, I knowin' that much.'

'Well,' said Armstrong, 'I'll waste a little now. Did y' ever repent of turning your son out of doors?' The old man's hands quivered a little on the crook of his walking-stick, and he stared hard and breathed hard at his questioner. 'I know very well ye did.'

'No,' said Ezekiel obstinately. 'I was i' the right, an' Job was i' the wrong.'

'Oh!' cried Mrs. Armstrong, 'it's well known what he is, William. Don't speak another word to him.'

'I niver leave this house,' Ezekiel retorted, 'without bein' thankful as I'm a widerer.'

Armstrong ignored this passage-at-arms, and went on quietly.

'All the while the lad was away ye were breaking your heart, and ye're just th' unhappiest old man at this minute in the kingdom. Ye have a tender spot in ye, and ye're ashamed of it. The lad suffered a great wrong at your hands, and it's your place to go up to him and make the first advances. Ye cursed him in this very house, and bade him darken your doors no more.'

'He might ha' come back,' said Ezekiel. 'When he came home again to Castle Barfield I'd ha' took him back again if

he'd ha' come.' He knowed I would, but he's that cussid an' hard, an' that unbendin' as he wouldn't come anigh his own father.'

'Did ye tell him he was welcome back again?' asked the Scot gravely. 'Did ye take the curses off his head? Was there ever one friendly word spoken to the lad by his own father? Man, man—ye're gettin' auld, and before long you'll be at your last account.'

'Talk Scripter by all manner o' means!' cried the grim old fellow. 'But am I th' on'y one to blaam? Has my son Job been i' the right all the while? Moughtn't he ha' come up to me 'ears an' 'ears ago, an' ha' put forrad a hand to his father?'

'You're not altogether responsible for your son's shortcomings,' Armstrong answered, 'but ye just have to balance your own book. Put your pride in your pocket, Round, and go to your lad and just say nothing at all beyond telling him ye'll be right-down glad to see him any hour he'll call.'

'I am going home now, grandfather,' said Sarah, rising and laying her hand upon his shoulder. 'Will you come with me?'

'No,' he said roughly, pushing her hand away with his own, and rubbing at the place where it had rested. 'Bring him to me, an' I'll be glad to see him, but I'll niver set foot beyand his doorpost till he comes into my house and maks friends again.'

Sarah, standing behind her grandfather's chair, caught Armstrong's glance, and nodded to him to say no more.

'Will you see me home, grandfather?' she asked.

'I'll do that,' he answered, 'willin' an' free,' and stooping for his hat he arranged the red handkerchief inside it, and then set it on his head and nodded a surly good-night to Armstrong.

'Your father's a hard un—a bitter hard un, Sarer,' he said, as he and the girl came upon the street together.

'Now, grandfather,' said the girl, taking one of his unyielding fists and tucking it within her arm, 'you mustn't say unpleasant things about father to me. There isn't a better father or a better man in the world. And as for you, grandfather, it's not a bit of use for you to pretend with me. You want us all to think that you are a very wicked old man, and harder and bitterer than anybody else in the world. I don't know why you take a pride in persuading people to think such things, but they're not true, and you would be a great deal happier if you gave up pretending.'

'Oh!' said Ezekiel, 'you'm i' the right on it, i' stickin' up for your own father. But he's been a bad son to me, Sarer.'

'How dare you say so, you wicked old man?' returned his granddaughter, with much severity of manner. 'The very last time you saw him you swore at him; Grandfather Armstrong says you did. Never you let *me* hear you swear. And you turned him out of house and home, and you told him never to darken your doors again. And all for what? Because he loved my poor mamma and wanted to marry her. Yes, and he did marry her, you bad-hearted man, and he didn't care about her being poor—what man would care about a girl being poor if he loved her?—and now you haven't got a soul to leave your money to, for you dare not leave it to father, and I wouldn't touch a penny of it.'

This speech was delivered with impressive and unfeminine slowness, and in a voice curiously grave and sweet—a full contralto which was in perfect keeping with the girl's liberally moulded limbs and her uncommon stature.

'Be you agoin' to turn agin me?' said Ezekiel, with a whine.

'What do you expect if you abuse my father to my face?' asked Sarah. 'If you act badly I shall do my duty as your granddaughter and tell you of it. I shall talk to you pretty roundly by-and-by, sir, if you don't mend.'

Ezekiel, having been a tyrant all his life, had found somebody to tyrannise over him in his old age. Taking it all together, he rather liked it than not, though he made occasional protests of freedom, and submission and rebellion checkered each other about as equally as the black and white on a chess-board.

'Is that how you talkin' to your elders?' he said, making an effort to assert himself.

'When you deserve it,' answered Sarah, with absolute gravity; 'not otherwise. I have a very great mind that until you behave yourself properly to my father, I'll never speak to you again. I'm not quite sure that it's dutiful in me to speak to you while you are on such bad terms with my father.'

'Goo it!' cried Ezekiel, 'goo it, my gell! I shan't worrit nobody much longer. I'm as lone as death a'ready pretty nigh, an' I shall be as happy under churchyard mould as ever I've been above it this last five-and-twenty 'ear. They've all been again me from the first; theer eeat been a one on 'em as has took my side. Theer's Clem Bache, as I've gi'en maney an' maney a sixpence to

when he was a lad, an' allays was kind to, though he *is* a cripple, an' he walks by me i' the very street, 'ithout as much as sayin', "How be you, Mr. Round?" Theer's ne'er a soul i' Castle Barfield as ain't been upset againe me all along. An' now my gran'-child's turnin' sour on my hands.'

'Do you think they would all be against you if you had been in the right?' asked Sarah. 'Oh no, grandfather. If you are lonely in your old age, whose fault is it? If you go to your own fireside to-night and have nobody to talk to, whose fault is it? You've only to ask father, and I know that he'll be friends again. He bears no malice, but how can you expect him to come to you when you've never taken back the dreadful words you used to him, and when you have never spoken to him all these years?'

'Ah!' said Ezekiel, looking as dour as a bulldog, 'they'd like to see me a-knucklin' under. That ud be a noo sight for 'em, that would. But they'n niver witness it. Nobody iver knowed me to gi' myself in i' the wrong.'

'And you will die without asking your only child to see you?' said the girl.

'Die?' replied the old man. 'Who's a-talkin' about dyin'? Theer's life i' me for maney 'ears yit, please God.'

'Well, here's the gate, grandfather.' The old fellow drew his sullen, pugnacious fist from the hollow of her arm. 'Can't I persuade you to come in?' she asked. 'Won't you come, for my sake, grandfather?'

'What?' cried Ezekiel, with a fierce quaver in his voice. 'Don't try to wheedle *me*, my wench! Niver try to wheedle *me*!'

'Shall I tell him from you that you will be glad to see him? Shall I tell him that you want to see him?'

The surly, obstinate old rascal began to shake and quaver, in-somuch that his stick rattled on the dry little pebbles of the roadway. The girl bent down and took both his hands in hers, and her beautiful face came close to him in the twilight.

'Let me make you happy, grandfather,' she said. 'Let me give you the wish of your heart.'

'Yo' can tell him,' said Ezekiel, with an exaggerated surliness of demeanour, and a gruffer voice than common, 'as if he likes to come an' mek it up, I'm willin'. Yo' can tell him as theer's nobody so welcome i' my house as he'll be if he likes to come to it.'

'God bless you, dear!' she said, and, stooping a little nearer, kissed him on the cheek.

'Mind you,' said Ezekiel, 'it eat to b' understood as I've knocked under.'

'Don't spoil a good deed, grandfather,' the girl besought him. 'Go home now, dear, and he shall follow you directly.'

She left him there, and opening the gate ran down the path, and, finding the door beneath the porch ajar, entered that way. The front room was dark except for a solitary pencil of light which came through the inner doorway, and evidenced the presence of a lamp beyond. She had scarce discerned even this when she heard a voice speaking within, and the agonised accent seemed to strike all life and power of motion from her limbs.

'For her sake,' said her father's voice, 'O Lord, for her sake take the curse away. Her hands are clean, her soul is innocent. Avenge my sins on me alone, and visit not the blameless for the guilty.'

The ponderous tones throbbed with passionate entreaty, and a something electric in the voice touched the unwilling listener with a thrill and tremor such as she had never felt before. The stillness which followed on the words seemed to hum and murmur in her ears, and her heart beat—or so she fancied—audibly. A wild sob broke the silence, and the girl stepped back without a sound, wringing her hands tightly together. She ran trembling on tiptoe to the gate and clung to it, feeling as if her feet had profaned some place of awful sanctity. She had never known her father pray before, but had prayed for him in her childish and maidenly devotions a thousand times, and now she had surprised a secret which was sacred beyond measure.

All this at first,—and then—the words. He was praying for her—that the curse might be removed from her! What curse? But she had no right to question of this thing, no right to let a curious thought dwell upon it for an instant.

Whilst she yet stood at the gate, the moon, which at this season of the month was tardy in rising, stole up above the trees at the rear of the cottage, and in its dreamlike light the girl watched the quiet road before her as if in a dream, until her father's heavy footfall on the paved yard awoke her. She moved the latch of the gate softly and without noise, and was about to slip into the road, when she changed her mind and allowed the gate to fall back into its place with a clatter.

'Is that you, Sarah?' said her father, as he came round the cottage to meet her. His tones were usual, and when he stooped

to kiss her, as he always did after any little absence of howsoever brief duration, she could see in the moonlight that his face was calm.

'Father,' she said, reaching both hands to his shoulder and knitting her fingers together over it, 'say no to anything else I may ask you, but say yes to this. I have seen Grandfather Round. He wants to be friends with you. He told me to tell you that there was nobody so welcome in his house as you would be if you would only go there.'

'And you want me to go, sweetheart?' asked Job.

'I do so want you to go to him,' she answered. 'I have been talking to him to-night, and he says he feels as lonely as death, and that he will be as happy under churchyard mould as ever he has been above it this last five-and-twenty years. He wants to see you, dear.'

'Is he at home?' said her father. 'I'll go at once. He had only need to say much less than that at any time.'

So without more ado Job Round passed out at the garden gate and walked along the High Street to his father's door. The old man stood in the doorway.

'You'n been a long time mekin' up your mind, Job,' he said. It was five-and-twenty years to a day since they had last spoken to each other, and both had that fact in mind.

'I would have come at any time,' said Job, 'if I had had a sign that you cared to have me here.'

'Thee'st shake hands, Job?' the old mastiff answered, with a growl. 'Wooten't?'

'With all my heart,' said Job.

'Come in,' mumbled Ezekiel, and his son followed him into the well-remembered room. 'Do you tek anythink to drink of a evenin'? You've growed, Job.'

It was not an eloquent reception, but the visitor was satisfied with it. A great love and a great fear in his own heart were beginning to work an alteration in him.

CHAPTER V.

THERE was something of a sense of holiday-making about a summer Sunday in Castle Barfield. For one thing, people lay luxuriously abed with the certainty that though broad daylight had arrived no nimble ninepence was afield to tempt and reward the chase.

For another thing, when they did get up they dressed themselves in other and finer garments than they usually wore. Again, before trying on the false shirt-front and tall collars, it was reasonable to have a lazy lounging half-hour over breakfast, and to take it in one's clean shirt sleeves, whilst seated on the front doorstep of the house in view of the sunlit street and of many neighbours occupied in a like manner. And then, somehow, the church-bells, though possibly not provocative of merriment to church-goers, made rare music for idle fellows who were only above ground occasionally, and who found the fields and green lanes a pleasant change from the black depths of the coal-mine, and the act of doing nothing, one dare fancy, a pleasant change from the labour of the week. If the church bells brought an invitation to worship to the ears of one in five in Castle Barfield, they brought to the remaining four news of immunity from labour, clear visions of open spaces, of wheat fields with the scarlet poppy beaming here and there, of trees prodigal of shade above the sun-beaten lanes, and willows drawing their lower boughs through the clear waters of the brook.

Even to-day, when almost everything is changed, the ladies of Castle Barfield wear fuller colours than find acceptance in fashionable places, but five-and-twenty years ago they shone in reds, and blues, and greens, and yellows—not mere tones of colour, but colours absolute, positive, unmistakable—and that she was happiest who most unendurably smote the eye of the observer. And what with the sunshine and those amazing dresses and ribbons, and the pealing of the bells, and the cartloads of Sunday merry-makers who went that way towards the country, the road to the old church was bright indeed. A cartload of merry-makers comprised as many men and women as a cart could hold, and the best of men (on Sundays) disdained to be merciful to his beast. The pigeon-flyers, each carrying his bird in a square little wooden box pierced all over with airholes, mixed with the church-going crowd, and were, for some occult reason, supposed to be Sabbath-breakers of the blackest sort. They used a good deal of coarse language, to be sure, but then it was the only tongue they knew, and its grisly expletives and adjectives meant nothing, and, unless to the cause of good taste, did little harm.

It surprised a good many of the old church-goers to see Job Round walking churchwards with his daughter on his arm. That was a spectacle Castle Barfield had never seen before, and it was

known that since his return to his birthplace Job had been within the walls of a church but three times—once to marry and once to bury his wife, and once to attend his daughter's christening. But when Sarah entered at the porch Job took placidly to wandering about the graveyard reading the inscriptions on the tombstones, and by-and-by, when the organ began to drone and murmur within the building, he sat down beside a railed monument and lit a pipe. It was a blazing day, and the windows of the church were open, so that the voice of the curate was now and then distinct to him, though it mostly sounded like a mere rumble in the echoing building. The hymn and the simple anthem reached him quite clearly, and filled him with all manner of vague and confused feelings and memories. He remembered just such a day as this, more than five-and-thirty years ago, when he had played truant from Sunday-school, and, running down the dusty road outside the graveyard, had heard the organ playing and the people singing that same old hymn—

They and the hills on which they grow
Are sometimes hurried far away,
And leap like hinds that bounding go,
Or unicorns in youthful play.

He recalled his youthful astonishment at these lines when he had first encountered them in the new version of the psalms fitted to the tunes sung in churches. He had scarce smiled at this memory when he fell to thinking of his mother and his wife, and was moved to rise and seek out their burial-places. There are men to whom the graceful emotions come easily, who have an enjoyable tear at command at any moment, in readiness for any call the little heart (or the feeble nerves which act as the heart's *locum tenens*) may make upon it; but he was not of that kidney, and there was no sign of feeling visible about him. He stood a long time before each grave, until at last, broad daylight though it was, a strange creeping feeling of half-terror got hold of him at the thought that the mother and the wife might be near him. Well—he and they would meet no more. They had both been saints upon earth, and had gone into the sacred gladness appointed for them and their like, and he and they would meet no more.

‘Grace would be glad to see me,’ he said to himself, with a simple gravity, ‘and so would poor old mother. But it is to be hoped that God keeps the concerns of this beastly little planet out of the minds of His angels. They are happy, and they couldn’t

be happy if they remembered me. I suppose they'd know everything if they knew me now at all.'

He was standing before his mother's headstone as these thoughts crossed him, and he stooped mechanically to pick away a little of the moss which obscured her name. The moss clung as if it were part of the stone, and he drew out his pocket-knife and fell to scraping it away. Murmurs floated through the open windows of the church, footsteps and voices of passers-by sounded clear in the lane beside him. He was dreaming over his task, and his fingers were moving more and more slowly and automatically, when a voice startled him wide awake.

'Mornin', sir,' said the voice. 'Fine sort o' ripenin' weather for the wheat this is.'

'I'm very glad to have met you, Bowling,' said another voice in answer. 'Will you earn a shilling by carrying this little packet for me? Wait a moment whilst I write the address. Job Round, Esquire, Konak Cottage, High Street, Castle Barfield. Anybody will tell you where it is. If Mr. Round is at home, tell him who sent it, and say that I had meant to bring it myself, but that I found the heat a little fatiguing. There is no answer. There's your shilling. Thank you.'

'Poor Clem!' said Job to himself: 'this is one of his bad days. I can tell that by his voice.'

'Thanky, sir,' said Mr. Bowling respectfully. 'I'll walk down there now. My ways are not particular of a Sunday.'

'This happens fortunately,' mused Job, still kneeling on the churchyard grass, whilst the footsteps faded out of hearing. 'Mr. Bowling is on his way to a new astonishment, and it will be as well for him to get it over. He has not yet identified John Smith with Job Round, Esquire, and since he is bound to do it he had better do it when the two gentlemen rolled into one stand in the flesh before him.'

As he moved to regain his feet he laid one hand upon the tombstone, and had half arisen, when the name, newly scraped clear of its encrusting mosses, caught his eye, and he dropped back upon the grass again and withdrew his hand, as if the stone had suddenly grown red-hot. For a single second or less there was a vivid horror in his eyes, and this having vanished as quickly as it came he stared gloomily awhile at the stone; and as he rose he said, half aloud: 'Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed! . . . There's a thing for a son to have lived to be thankful for!'

He walked slowly away, striding deliberately over the grassy mounds, and in a little while his face assumed its usual look of tranquil defiance. When he came upon the road he could make out the sailor's figure in the distance, and, setting after it at a good round pace, presently diverged from the street and struck a short cut across the fields. Walking at the same brisk rate he reached the cottage, and sat down to await the arrival of the messenger. Probably Mr. Bowling found the High Street deserted at that hour on a Sunday morning, and Job saw him pass the gate twice before he could make up his mind about the cottage. Shortly after the second passing he returned, and leaning his elbows on the gate took a leisurely stare about him, and finally pushed the gate aside and came, with his rolling, nautical step, along the gravelled pathway. The owner of the cottage—himself concealed by the thin lace window-curtains—watched, with something of the smile he had worn at their interview of a week or two before, and even chuckled with a grim merriment as the man came unconsciously along.

'I seem fated to astonish you, Thomas,' he said when Mr. Bowling knocked, and rising from his seat he flung the door open and faced his visitor. 'Well,' he asked, 'what do *you* want here?'

'I've made a error,' said Mr. Bowling humbly. 'I'm a-looking for Konak Cawtage.'

'This is Konak Cottage,' said Job. 'What do you want here?'

'I've got a bit of a package for Job Round, Esquire,' returned Mr. Bowling.

'Very good,' said Job, stretching out his hand.

'I was to give it to the gentleman,' said Mr. Bowling, as yet unsuspicious, but desiring to give a little unnecessary trouble if it could be safely done.

'Very well,' answered Job with a matter-of-fact manner. 'Where is it?'

'I was to give it to Job Round, Esquire,' said Mr. Bowling.

'Then give it to Job Round, Esquire,' replied Job, 'and go about your business.'

Mr. Bowling began to stare, and Job looked calmly over his head at the street beyond.

'Job Round, Esquire,' said the messenger feebly.

'Precisely,' returned the other, with a dry delight in tormenting him. 'And Mr. Bache, who paid you just tenpence too much for this small service, entrusted you with a message for me. But

I am treating so old and warm a friend a little coldly, I'm afraid. Come in, William.'

Mr. Bowling, led by the beard, entered the cottage with a crestfallen and bewildered aspect, and Job was obviously amused at him.

'You are not an ornament to a parlour, William,' he said, still holding him by the beard, 'and I will trouble you to come into the kitchen. Thank you. Take a seat.' Being compelled into a chair, and then released, Mr. Bowling looked about him more vacuously than before. 'Discharge your little commission, William,' said his tormentor. 'Let me have the packet addressed to me.'

The messenger, who wore a corduroy coat in honour of the day, groped in the inner breast-pockets, and after a good deal of uncertain fumbling produced his trust and handed it to Job, who leisurely broke the cord which surrounded the packet.

'Your features, William,' he said with a twinkling gravity, 'are charged with an expression of surprise. If I may venture to interpret that expression, I should assume that you had not expected to find me here. One might have thought that the name of the cottage would have awakened some memory of your sojourn in the East, and would have prepared for another pleasant little revival of your Eastern memories.' But the message, William? What was the message?'

'Mr. Bache given me the package,' said William with exceedingly feebleness, 'and he said he would ha' brought it himself, but he found the 'eat a little tiring.'

'A poor memory,' answered Job, 'always a poor memory. Fatiguing was the word he used, wasn't it, William?'

'I will not tell a lie to a old companion,' said Mr. Bowling, with an unsuccessful attempt to seem at ease. 'Fatiguing was the word, now that I come to think upon it.'

He was reduced to a condition altogether abject, and sat looking about him with shifty eyes, whilst Job, standing in front of him, opened the little packet and drew from it some loose printed sheets, which he turned over with the face of a man well pleased. By-and-by something attracted his attention, and he began to read. The printed pages came between his face and Mr. Bowling's, and Mr. Bowling evidently found comfort in that fact, and began slowly to gather his scattered wits together. Job continuing to read with an oblivion of Mr. Bowling's presence, which was perhaps a little ostentatious, the scared man began

to look about him with some keenness of observation, to notice the extreme simplicity of the apartment, its smallness, and the positive scantiness of the furniture. This survey completed, it was not unnatural, since Job stood within a yard of him, that he should turn his regards from the house to its master. Everything Job wore was well made and of good material, but was simple in style and carelessly worn, and there was nothing in his aspect which argued of wealth to the observer's eyes.

'Fifty thousand pound?' said Mr. Bowling, inwardly. 'He doesn't look as if he'd ever owned fifty thousand penny pieces. Got through it, I reckon. Ah! the spree a man *could* have with a sum like that!'

He sighed audibly, and the reader, with his face still hidden by the printed pages, twinkled for an instant and immediately became grave again.

Now whilst Job read on with an intentness much more apparent than real, Mr. Bowling's eyes became fixed with an expression of interest upon a trinket which hung from his companion's watch-chain, a mere disc of gold, rimmed at the edge like a coin, and about the size of a silver dollar. The surface of this golden disc was highly polished, and it reflected the slant rays of the light from the window, until it seemed rather like silver than gold with excess of brightness. A casual movement of Job's figure destroyed this effect, and, bringing the medal full in line with Mr. Bowling's vision, revealed to him certain fine but deeply graven marks upon its face. He strained his sight to make out these signs, and the curiosity he exhibited looked greatly out of proportion with its object. The little gold disc seemed fairly to fascinate the man, and his tangled head drew nearer and nearer to it until it came within Job Round's line of sight, and at that second Mr. Bowling received so sound a cuff that he fell from his chair and sat in a quite surprising manner upon the floor.

'Eh?' said Job, in a soft, wicked-sounding falsetto. Mr. Bowling said nothing, but gazed about him with an air of bewilderment as if he were asking himself how he came there. 'Get up,' said Job, with a return to his tone of cruel banter. 'I am fated to surprise you, William. I expected you to manifest some interest in this'—holding the trinket in his thumb and finger—'and I waited for it. Would you like to know the exact latitude and longitude, and to go out and dig with pick and shovel?'

'I wasn't doing no harm, Johnny,' said Mr. Bowling. 'What's

it matter now who knows the spot?—let alone a old chum like me. What is there left to go and dig for?’

‘How do you know what it matters, William? How do you know what is left to go and dig for?’

Mr. Bowling had scrambled to his knees and had stayed there, not feeling quite sure what might happen if he arose to his feet, but he forgot his fears at this speech and stood up with a wild look in his eyes.

‘You brought it back with you?’ he cried, in a voice hoarse with excitement. ‘You brought it back?’

‘Does this look as if I brought it back?’ Job asked, waving his hand lightly here and there, and smiling.

‘Spent it? You might ha’ spent it.’

‘I assure you, William, that I have not had the spending of it, and I quite believe that so far nobody has spent it. Why don’t you go and have a try for it, William?’

‘A try for it!’ groaned the other. ‘I’ve wandered barfoot about them hills. I’ve done all but die there.’

‘And if you only knew the latitude and longitude,’ said Job, with a voice of sympathy, ‘you could go straight to the place—couldn’t you, William?’

‘I’d fetch it myself and share fair, Johnny,’ said Mr. Bowling. ‘I would. By the Lord I would.’ Job laughed outright, but the old chum’s face was a study. The very concupiscence of greed was in it. ‘I’d go out with you, Johnny. I’d work. I’d fight. Nothing’d frighten me.’

‘Not even the thought of poisoning a comrade?’ said Job. ‘William, I regret to be forced to the conclusion that I cannot trust you.’

‘You ain’t agoin to let it lie and rot theer, are you, Johnny?’ No coward ever pleaded more passionately for life. ‘Oh, you can’t! You can’t do it. You couldn’t find the heart to do it?’

‘William,’ said Job, with calm amusement, ‘I would much rather every piastre rotted there than that you should hold one between your thumb and finger. You know me pretty well, don’t you? You can go now, and you can speak to me again when you have quite made up your mind that you don’t care to go on living. A word about this business to a single soul will serve your turn as well as if it was spoken to me. Now, *hidi, git*, William. *Chabouk*—and—oor Allah!’

Mr. Bowling stooped for his billycock hat, which lay upon the

floor, and retired unwillingly before Job's outstretched hand. When he reached the door the outstretched hand took hold of him by the collar, and turned him about so that he cowered from an expected kick, and was relieved to find himself simply pushed across the doorstep. He lingered there a minute or two, and peered in at the windows until he saw Job approaching with wrathful face, when he turned incontinently and fled.

At the 'Ring o' Bells' that evening Mr. Bowling was observed to drink much more freely than was his wont, and it was remarked that he was taciturn and surly. As a general thing he had been liberal of speech, and he had so many wonders to tell of that the more intelligent of the yokels, and the better read amongst the workmen who frequented the house, had pronounced him inj'yable comp'ny. Two or three attempts were made to draw him out, but he was proof against them all. Liquor had but a small effect upon him, but he drank so much on this particular evening that his tongue became thick and his eyes drowsy. Finally he arose from his seat upon the stocks, and, lifting his delft mug high in the air, threw it across the road, where it broke into many fragments, with a crash which gave an affectionate young couple who happened to be passing in the twilight a nervous and startled sensation.

'I'll do it,' said Mr. Bowling, loudly but indistinctly; 'I'll do it. And if I can't do it myself I'll find them as can.'

'Aaron,' said one of the affectionate young people to the other, 'did the man throw at you?'

'No, my darling. He's excited with drink,' said Aaron. 'I know the fellow. He works for Clement Bache's father. I'll have a talk with him next time I see him, and teach him better than to throw crockeryware about like that.'

It was this little episode of the broken delft mug which introduced Aaron Whittaker to Mr. Bowling, with results that neither of them was able to guess at.

CHAPTER VI.

MAN in all ages has made God after his own image, worshipping his own best or his own most wonderful. When the black man passes the bit of rag or broken stick or other fetishry in the tropic forest, he gifts it with all he has, and might, if he could

translate himself, produce out of his own conceptions a moderate bogey for a white infant. Unprejudiced observers passing the same fragment of fetishry go by unmoved, and the devout nigger is wonder-stricken at their blindness. Not to see devilry and divinity and all unseen, unknowable, and terrible things in that bit of fluttering rag or those crossed branches is to be insensible to loftier thoughts, to be as one of the beasts that perish.

It is something of a pity—though the mischief is out of the power of philosophy to cure—that a willing or unwilling submission to the fetish-worshipper's mental state should be a common preliminary to the most important of human contracts. It is all the more a pity because the intensity of worship is in proportion—as worship always is—not to the beauty and majesty of the deity, but to the spiritual excellence, the purity, the goodness, the self-devotion of the worshipper. It is all the more a pity still, that a man or a maid, whether in Belgravia or Castle Barfield, having selected his or her fetish, is bound to stick to it, even in the after-days of enlightenment, and to continue with hollow observance those forms of worship which were once an instinct of the soul.

It was the merciful provision of a code whose framers were unusually fertile in the invention of themes for legislation that ox and ass should not be yoked together, lest the stronger and more tractable animal should do all the pulling, and whilst working for two should only get credit for one. There is no provision of that kind possible for marriage, and even if there were, the bovine imagination would be strong enough to take the longest-eared brother of the paddock and make an ox of him.

In love as in worship you do but survey yourself in a glass, with this difference, that you find not your existing self, but your most beautiful possible ideal self, there reflected. Do you think purity lovable?—then your love is pure. Do you venerate courage?—then is your love courageous. How often do you think human hearts come together? For the most part we live lonely—lonely. And we love the better part of ourselves and hate the worse, whilst we fancy we love and hate our fellows.

But it is easy, and of little profit, to fall into a melancholy mood about almost any phase of human affairs; and if the golden dream turn grey we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that it was golden whilst it lasted.

Come. The merry mower whets his scythe, and, though

perhaps scarcely as merry as the poet paints him, is at least brown and strong and as free from care as most men. Near at hand the scrape of the hone upon the steel sets the teeth on edge, but when you are far enough away the steel rings out by itself as clear as a bell, and upon my word there is a touch of merriment in the sound. Let us keep a politic distance. Here is a shady nook in the far corner of the field where two great elms stretch out arms of benediction, and where, with your feet in a dry ditch, you can sit or lounge with your back against a delicious support of fresh green turf—green still, while all other grass is brown, by virtue of that shadow of blessing cast by the two great elms. But this delightful nook is occupied already. A young man is here with his arm about a girl's waist, and the girl is making no objection to that condition of affairs, and they are talking in a confidential way.

A peculiarity about this pair which is worth notice is that the man has the lighter voice of the two. He talks in a thin tenor, whilst the girl talks in a grave and sweet contralto, by which, if you please, you are not to understand at all a dragoon-like voice, but a finely modulated series of tones at once full and gentle, and altogether womanly. In almost any other country in the world such a voice would inevitably have made a fortune for its possessor; but in England, where beautiful voices are so common, the trained ear is rare.

'My darling,' says the young man in his light tenor tones, 'the story is as old as the hills. We can do what other people have done. If we were once quietly married, your father would come round as easily as possible.'

'I can't say, Aaron,' said the girl, 'that I won't ever deceive my father, because I'm afraid I've done that already, but I won't deceive him any longer.'

'You wouldn't let him come between us, dear?' says the young man pathetically. 'You wouldn't throw me over if he told you to?'

'No, Aaron,' said the girl with a gravity which lost none of its sweetness by reason of the blushing cheeks and downcast eyes: 'nobody'll ever come between you and me. A child must render obedience to a certain point, but not beyond. But I shouldn't dream of marrying without his knowledge, though I might marry without his consent. I hope it may never come to that, and I trust it never will. You can be sure of me, Aaron. I shall know no change.'

At this Aaron very naturally fell to kissing her fingers, with murmured protests that she was the sweetest and the dearest girl in the world. She did not repulse him, or make any pretence of coyness, but she went on gravely—

‘You can come down this afternoon, and we will see father together. If he asks you what brings you there, you must tell him. I don’t feel happy, Aaron, in meeting you on the sly like this, and I shall never meet you again until father knows.’

‘He’ll do all he can,’ cried Aaron, ‘to part us and keep us apart. He doesn’t like me, and he lets me see it. He’ll do everything he can to prejudice you against me.’

‘What is to prejudice me against *you*, Aaron?’ asked the girl.

‘Ah!’ cries Aaron, ‘you don’t think so now; but if he asks you not to see me for a month or two, and keeps on dropping a word here to my disadvantage and there to my discredit, all that’ll begin to tell in time.’

‘You don’t know father,’ the girl answered with a smile. ‘He is not a backbiter. If he has anything against you, Aaron, he’ll tell you plainly, but he won’t speak behind your back.’ Young Mr. Whittaker found no comfort in that reflection. ‘And what a poor opinion you have of me,’ she continued with a brighter smile, ‘to think me such a weathercock!’

‘But, my darling,’ urged Aaron, ‘what is the use of having a tempest at all, if we can get along without one?’ He was not disposed to be proud of himself, and he must needs put as good a colour on his cowardice as such a material would take. ‘I don’t care for myself,’ he added therefore; ‘I haven’t got to live with your father day by day and be made to see that I’ve offended him. I haven’t got to defy an offended parent’s will.’ He began to think well of this line of argument. It not only defended himself and showed his solicitude for her, but it offered very good reasons to his mind why she should adopt the course he wished her to take. To kill three birds with one stone is quite a conversational achievement.

‘I have been too cowardly already,’ Sarah answered, ‘and when I think how much he trusts me, I feel ashamed of myself. There’s nobody loves me better than my father does—no, not even you, Aaron. Nobody does. Nobody ever can. Aaron, my dear, I can’t bear to deceive him for another hour.’

Saying this, she rose and stepped from the dry ditch into the field. Aaron, with no great willingness, followed her.

'My darling,' he said, 'don't act rashly. Think it over. What you are going to do may part us.' She looked him steadily in the face, and it was a little embarrassing for such a young man to have so downright a lover.

'Nothing will ever part us, Aaron, so long as you love me. But oh, my dear! how can I let father think ill of me? How can I let him think that you were afraid of him?'

That was sailing a little too near the truth to be pleasant for Aaron.

'I *am* afraid of him,' he answered diplomatically, 'but I have a right to be afraid for your sake. Your father's strong enough and big enough to take any man in Castle Barfield at a mouthful, but I don't suppose he'll want to eat me for falling in love with his daughter. But he doesn't like me, Sarah—and that's the truth—and he'll do all he can to prevent you from marrying me.'

'He will like you when he comes to know you, Aaron,' said the girl; but Aaron, though he could accept the compliment thus conveyed, had yet his doubts as to the trustworthiness of the forecast.

'I'm not so sure of that,' he said; 'your father's prejudiced against me.'

'Very well, dear,' she answered; 'we will try to remove the prejudice. I never knew anybody who had such a dislike of anything that wasn't straightforward as my father has. The only way to please him is to be without disguise.'

'We've displeased him past remedy already,' said Aaron, 'if he only knew.'

'Not past remedy,' said the girl. 'Aaron, I am sure this is my duty. Let us go now, together. The longer we delay, the harder it will be.'

It has been said already that according to his lights the young man was in love, and even the timidest creature has a little more fight in him than common when he is moved in that way. He was not courageous by nature, but he had exhausted entreaty and persuasion and had found them unavailing, and now, since nothing but courage could win the lady, he must needs muster up as much as he could command, and, though a coward confessed in his own mind, must look brave to the girl's eyes. No doubt many a gentleman of old days attired himself in cold iron, and took his way to the lists, under the influence of similar emotions; and no

doubt some of them, considerably to their own surprise, would acquit themselves pretty well after all.

'Very well, darling,' said Aaron. 'My fears are for you. You know your father better than I do, and if you are not afraid of him, I need not fear for you any longer.'

Of course it was sweet to be told that his fears were for her, and of course she believed him.

'And you do love me?' the tenor voice murmured, 'and you won't allow anything he can say to part us?'

'My dear,' she answered, 'he won't try to part us when he knows——'

Surely the pause would have been eloquent to any lover.

The haymakers watched them as they walked side by side across the field. It was a simple place and a simple time, and the love affairs of most young people were carried on quite openly, and with no pretence of concealment. Besides Job Round there was nobody whom this particular engagement in the least concerned who did not know all about it, and he might have known but for the isolation in which it generally pleased him to live.

They make a picture in my mind. The fierce sunlight and the drowsy shadows, the wide hayfield and its boundary hedges set with great trees, the red and grey of the parsonage standing cool and shaded amid high boskage a field or two away, the lovers in the attire of '58—so recent, yet so quaint and out of date already—and the scattered haymakers turning to look after them.

'Ebenezer,' says one brown and withered ancient, 'thee'st see a finer couple nowheer.'

'Thee wast allays a judge of a good-lookin' wench, Jabez,' says the withered ancient's compeer. 'Her's as good as her looks, but I mislikin' the lad a bit. It's no bad sight, howsever, to look on at a young pair a sweetheartin' of a day like this.'

'Thee'd a sight sooner do that nor work. Eh, Ebenezer?'

'That I ud,' says Ebenezer, leaning on his rake to watch the lovers from the field. 'I spoke to S'liner i' that very corner fifty 'ear agoo this haymakin'. We'm ode uns now, Jabez. Stir up, lad. We shall ha' the wagin back and nothin' ready, else.'

Sarah and Aaron chose the least-frequented and the longest road, as has been the way with lovers from time immemorial; but they walked up the High Street arm in arm, a proceeding which needed a little courage, since it was equal to the calling of the banns: a mere formal declaration of a thing already known,

but yet a declaration. Before things came to this stage Castle Barfield sweethearts would meet in the fields and would part again before they reached the streets, lest the gossiping townsfolk should know their secret.

No man ever cared less to make one of a storming party than Aaron Whittaker cared to face Job Round, and when he saw the said Job leaning on the garden gate he felt a curious loosening of the joints, and had some ado to keep himself upright. But Sarah feared neither mouse nor man, and, having already braved her own instincts of maidenly reticence, had conquered everything. She had never had reason to fear her father, for he had used her to a constant tenderness in himself, and though she knew him to be a little wilful she had always had her way with him.

But open astonishment and wrath blazed out in Job Round's face when he turned and saw the pair approaching arm in arm.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Round,' said Aaron, his light tenor voice a little shaky.

'Father,' said the girl, also trembling somewhat, but for a different reason, and blushing divinely, 'open the gate. I want to speak to you.' Job opened the gate without a word. 'Come in, Aaron,' she said, and Aaron entered, trying to look as if the father's glance was not still twisting in him like a knife. 'Wait there a moment.' Aaron waited, and Sarah, taking her father's arm in both hands, led him on one side and stood on tiptoe to whisper in his ear. He looked down at her with a pang, in which he could not tell if rage, or heartache, or pity were most strong, for her face was rosy with blushes and her bosom was fluttering, and he knew all her story before a word was spoken. 'Father,' she whispered, 'the young man has come a-courting, as you prophesied he would; and I have done as you told me, and have brought him to sit by the old dad's fireside.'

'You're not welcome to my house, Mr. Whittaker,' said Job, turning on the visitor, 'but I won't ask you to leave until I have had a talk with you. Walk inside, if you please.'

'Mr. Whittaker is *my* guest,' said Sarah, no longer trembling or blushing, but drawn to her full height, and looking like an indignant queen.

'I beg your pardon, my dear,' said her father. 'I will try to treat the young man civilly. Will you come this way, Mr. Whittaker?'

It was a cool welcome, but it was at least as warm as he had

expected, and Mr. Whittaker made shift to enter the cottage with a tolerable air of self-possession.

'Sarah,' said Job, 'you had better leave us for a little while.' Aaron cast a glance at her, and something of a look of surprise and bewilderment—almost of fear—dawned in her own face. There were few things which could be bitterer to her than to know that she had fallen in love with a coward, and Aaron did not look brave or at ease. But she would have no unworthy thought of her lover.

'I shall see you again before you go, Aaron,' she said, as she left the little parlour.

'Sit down,' said Job to his guest. 'What is your business with me?'

'I came at Miss Round's invitation,' said Aaron, 'because she was very much averse to a secret engagement.'

This was not very aptly put, but the father understood him.

'You want my leave to pay your addresses to my daughter?'

'Exactly,' said Aaron. 'Exactly, Mr. Round.'

'Very well.' Job sat with folded arms and surveyed the young man for full half a minute without further answer. 'Whatever I can do to prevent her from listening to you shall be done. I don't like you, Mr. Whittaker, and I don't think you are the man to make any good girl a husband.'

'I admit, sir,' said Aaron, 'that I have been a bit wild, but that's all over, I assure you, sir, and I should try to be a good husband.'

'You won't marry my daughter if I can help it,' said Job solidly. 'I have good reason for thinking ill of you, and I won't trust my child's immortal soul to *your* hands if I have any voice in the matter.'

'I can offer her a good position, Mr. Round,' said Aaron—'as good a position, sir, as you could wish for.'

'My daughter is in want of no man's money,' Job answered, 'and I am not talking or thinking about your position. Sarah will make her own choice, but I shall use a father's right, and advise her against you. There is no use in any more words. You can go now, and take my answer with you. One thing more. You won't speak to my girl again until I give you leave. You understand that? I don't want to threaten you, but you'll speak to her at your peril.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Round,' said the young man, taking

courage at the weary quietude of the other's manner, 'but I can't pledge myself not to speak to Miss Round. She has promised to be my wife, sir; and I believe she will keep her promise. All the same, Mr. Round, I don't want to be defiant; and I do assure you, sir, that I've done with my wild courses, and I shall do my best to make a good husband.'

'If you speak to her or write to her without my invitation or hers,' said Job, 'you will do it at your peril. I shall try to persuade her to have no more to do with you, and if I succeed I won't have you bothering her and making eyes at her.'

'I won't say that you're not treating me very courteously, Mr. Round,' began Aaron, but Job interrupted him.

'I mean neither to be courteous nor discourteous. Your feelings are not of the least interest to me, and I neither want to hurt you nor to spare you. It's a question of my daughter's welfare. If she has formed any attachment to you I shall try to persuade her against it.' Then he arose and opened the door which led into the little porch. 'Good afternoon, Mr. Whittaker.'

'I hope, sir,' said Aaron, 'that you will see fit to modify your poor opinion of me.'

'I have no hope of that sort,' Job returned. 'Good afternoon.'

Mr. Whittaker, seeing nothing else fit for it, bowed and took his leave. The interview had been less terrible than he had feared, but there was very little comfort in it. He did not dare to turn round for a last chance look from his sweetheart, for he knew that her father's eyes were upon him, and felt that their grave glance somehow impeded his gait, and made it feel mean and shuffling.

When Aaron had reached the gate, and had disappeared behind the hedge, Job closed the door, and moving to the foot of the stairs called his daughter by name, and when she descended he took her by both hands and regarded her with a look so intent, and mournful, and tender—an expression so different from any she had ever observed in his face until that moment—that it moved her strongly.

'My dear,' he said, 'you know I love you? Ah, you guess it, in a blind sort of way, as children do until they have children of their own. My darling, I'd lay my life down to make you happy. You're all I have in the world to care for, and I've no dearer wish than to see you blessed with a good husband. You're only a child yet, and you're innocent and ignorant of the world. I'm not

going to run counter to the wishes of your heart.' The tears were running down the girl's hot cheeks by this time, and at this she drew her hands from his, and casting both arms about his neck hid her face against his breast. He gave a great sigh and smoothed her radiant hair with his hands. 'You'll wait, my dear? You'll take a little time to think before you enter on the most important contract of your life? To please me.'

She kissed him vehemently, and then hid her head upon his breast again. He could feel her tears upon his face.

'I can't think well of the young man, my darling, and I can't hope that he will make you happy.'

'You will, for my sake, father,' she answered—her face still hidden.

'You must try to look at him with open eyes, my child; you must ask yourself all that a man ought to be, and all that he is.'

'He is a good man, father,' said the girl.

'To stand between you and him,' Job continued, with a heart-burning sense of impotence, 'would only make you care the more for him and the less for me. I shan't do that, because I know how useless it would be.' She made no answer, but in the pause she clasped him a little tighter round the neck, and he knew the meaning of the caress. 'He's the last young man in the world I should have chosen as a husband for you. And yet, it's you to choose, and I must accept your choice. And yet you'll think about it, dear. You'll know that your father must have grave reasons for speaking like this.'

She wept upon his breast, but that, and the answer of the caressing arms about his neck, was all the response she gave.

'Take a month, dear. Don't see him for that time, but listen to the advices of those who love you best, and have the deepest wishes for your happiness.'

'Father!'

'My darling!'

'Don't stand between us!'

Oh, hopeless task, to combat love with reasons!

'Not between you and happiness. No, no. But between you and disappointment, dear. . . . Sarah, take a month to think about it. Talk it over with your grandmother. She's a sensible woman, and loves you dearly.'

'Father.'

'Yes, darling.'



‘Don’t speak ill of him. Don’t think ill of him. If you weren’t friends, dear, it would break my heart.’

The helpless passion of love and sorrow surged so high in the father’s breast that his massive frame shook with it. When he spoke again his voice trembled.

‘Take a month to think, dear. You’re a good girl? You say your prayers?’ He felt his own hands like a profanation as they caressed her head, and suffered them to drop heavily at his sides.

‘Take the case there, dear,’ he said, his deep voice throbbing more and more. ‘Ask for light about it.’

He kissed her on the forehead and moved away. When she released him from her embrace, he walked heavily upstairs into his own room, and there, for a single moment surrendering himself to the inward tempest, he cast his hands high towards the ceiling, and his whole body writhed with the torment of his mind.

Then for a long time he stood like a breathing statue with his arms folded on his breast, and at last nodding his head slowly twice or thrice, and looking with ashen-grey face and unseeing eyes before him—‘Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children,’ he said. ‘My God! upon the children.’

(To be continued.)

